

# THE ARGOSY.

MARCH, 1876.

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EDINA.

BY MRS. HENRY WOOD, AUTHOR OF "EAST LYNNE."

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## CHAPTER VII.

### ROSE-COLOURED DREAMS.

THE sweet spring sunshine lay upon Trennach, and upon Dr. Raynor's surgery. Francis Raynor stood in it, softly whistling. Two sovereigns lay on the square table, amidst the small scales and the drugs and the bottles, and he was looking down upon them in some doubt. He wanted to convey this money anonymously to a certain destination, and he hardly knew how to accomplish it. Sovereigns were not at all plentiful with Frank; but he would, in his open-heartedness, have given away the last he possessed, and cast no regret after it.

"I know!" he suddenly cried, taking up a sheet of white paper. "I'll pack them up in an envelope and direct it to her, and get Gale the postman to deliver it on his round. Dame Bell is unsuspicious as the day, and will think the money is sent by Rosaline—as the last was. As to Gale?—oh, he is ready to do anything for me and Uncle Hugh, for doctoring his children for nothing. It's a shame he is paid so badly, poor fellow!"

Several weeks had gone on since the disappearance of Josiah Bell, and it was now close upon May. Bell had never returned: nothing could be heard of him. Mrs. Bell knew not what to make of it; she was a calm-natured, unemotional woman, and she took the loss more easily than some wives might have taken it. Bell was missing: she could make neither more nor less of it than that; he might come back sometime, and she believed he *would*: meanwhile she tried to do the best she could without him. In losing him, she had lost the benefit of his good wages, and they had been the home's chief support. She possessed

a very small income of her own, which she received quarterly—and this had enabled them to live in a superior way to most of the other miners—but this was not sufficient to keep her of itself. A managing, practical woman, Mrs. Bell had at once looked out for some way of helping herself in the dilemma, and found it. She took in two of the unmarried miners to lodge, one of them being Andrew Float, and she began to knit worsted stockings for sale. "I shall get along till Bell returns," was her cheerful remark to the community.

Rosaline was at Falmouth—and meant to remain there. She wrote word that she was helping her aunt with her millinery business, was already a good hand at it, and received wages, which she intended to transmit to her mother. The first instalment—it was not much—had already come. Frank Raynor had just called Dame Bell unsuspecting as the day. She was so. But, one curious fact, in spite of the non-tendency to suspicion, was beginning to strike her: that in all the letters written by Rosaline, she had never once mentioned her father's name, or inquired whether he was found.

Frank Raynor, elastic Frank, had recovered his spirits. It was perhaps impossible that one of his light nature and sanguine temperament should long retain the impression left by the dreadful calamity of that fatal March night. Whatever the precise details of the occurrence had been, he had managed to shake off outwardly the weight they had thrown upon him, and in manner was himself again.

Perhaps one thing, that helped him very considerably to do this, was his changed opinion as to the amount of knowledge possessed by Blase Pellet. At first he had feared the man; feared what evil he might bring. But, as the days and the weeks had gone on, and Blase Pellet did not speak, or give any hint to Trennach that he had aught in his power to betray, Frank grew to think that he really possessed it not; that though the man might vaguely suspect something wrong had occurred that night, he had not witnessed it, and was not actually cognisant of it. Therefore Frank Raynor had become in a measure his own light and genial self again. None could more bitterly regret the night's doings than he did: but his elastic temperament could throw off its signs: ay, and often its recollection.

The thing that troubled him a little was Mrs. Bell's position. It was through him she had been deprived of the chief means which had kept her home: therefore it was only just, as he looked upon it, that he should help her. Even with the profits from the two lodgers and the stockings, and with what Rosaline would be enabled to send, her weekly income would be very much smaller than it used to be. Frank wished with his whole heart that he could settle some money upon her, or make her a weekly allowance; but he was not rich enough for it. He would, however, help her a little now and again in secret—as much as he was able—and hence the destination of the two sovereigns.

In secret. It would not do to let her or anyone else know the money came from him, lest the question might be asked, What claim has she upon you that you should send it? To answer that truthfully would be singularly inconvenient.

Trennach in general could of course make no more of the disappearance of Bell than his wife made. It was simply not to be understood. Many and many an hour's discussion took place over it at the Golden Shaft, to the accompaniment of pipes and beer; many a theory was started. The man might be here, or he might be there; he might have strolled this way, or wandered that—but it all ended as it began: Bell was missing, and none of them could divine the cause. And the Seven Whistlers, that he heard on the Sunday night, or thought he heard, had certainly left no damage behind them for the miners. The men might just as well have been at work those three days, for all the accident that had occurred in the mines. Perhaps better.

Seated at the window of what was called the pink drawing-room at the Mount, from the colour of its walls, were Mrs. St. Clare and her daughter Lydia. The large window, shaded by its lace curtains, stood open to the warm, bright day. Upon the lawn was Margaret in her white dress, flitting from flower to flower, gay as the early butterflies that sported in the sunshine. Lydia, a peculiar expression on her discontented face, watched her sister's movements.

Frank Raynor had just gone out from his daily visit, carrying with him an invitation to dine with them in the evening. Lydia was really better; she no more wanted the attendance of a doctor than her sister wanted it: but she was eaten up with ennui still, and the daily, or nearly daily, coming of Frank Raynor was the most welcome episode in her present life. She had learned to look for him: perhaps had learned in a very slight degree to *like* him: at any rate his presence was ever welcome. Not that Lydia would have suffered herself to entertain any serious thoughts of the young surgeon—because he was a surgeon, and therefore far beneath her notice in that way—but she did recognize the fascination of his companionship, and enjoyed it. Latterly, however, an idea had dawned upon her that somebody else enjoyed it also—her sister—and the suspicion was extremely unwelcome. Lydia was of an intensely jealous disposition. She would not for all the world have condescended to look upon Frank Raynor as a lover, but her jealousy was rising up, now that she suspected Daisy might be doing so, somewhat after the fashion of the dog-in-the-manger. That little chit, Daisy, too, whom she looked upon as a child!—there was some difference, she hoped, between nineteen and her own more experienced age of five-and-twenty! She was fond of Daisy, but had not the least intention of being rivalled by her; and perhaps for the little one's own sake, it might be as well to speak.

As Frank went out, he crossed Daisy's path on the lawn. They

turned away side by side, walking slowly, talking apparently of the flowers; lingering over them, bending to inhale their sweet perfume. Mrs. St. Clare, a new magazine and a paper-knife in her hand—for she did make a pretence of reading now and then, though it was as much a penance as a pleasure—glanced up indifferently at them once, and then glanced down again at her book. But Lydia, watching more observantly, saw signs and wonders: the earnest, speaking gaze of Frank's blue eyes as they looked into Daisy's; the shy droop in hers; and the clinging pressure of the hands in farewell. He went on his way; and Daisy, detecting in that moment her sister's sharp glance from the window, made herself at once very busy with the beds and the flowers, as if they were her only thought in life.

"Mamma!"

The tone was so sharp a one that Mrs. St. Clare lifted her head in surprise. Lydia's voice was usually as supinely listless as her own.

"What is it, Lydia?"

"Don't you think that Daisy wants a little looking after?"

"In what way?"

"Of course I may be mistaken in my suspicions. But I think I am not. I will assume that I am not."

"Well, Lydia?"

"She and Mr. Raynor are flirting desperately."

Mrs. St. Clare made no reply whatever. Her eyes, fixed on Lydia's inquiringly, kept their gaze for a moment or so, and then fell on the magazine's pages again. Lydia felt a little astonished: was this indignation or indifference?

"Did you understand me, mamma?"

"Perfectly, my dear."

"Then—I really do not comprehend you. Don't you consider that Daisy must be restrained?"

"If I see Daisy do anything that I much disapprove, I shall be sure to restrain her."

"Have you not noticed, yourself, that they are flirting?"

"I suppose they are. Something of the kind."

"But *surely*, mamma, you cannot approve of Mr. Raynor! Suppose a serious attachment came of it, you could not suffer her to marry him!"

Mrs. St. Clare turned her book upside down upon her knee, and spoke in the equable manner that characterised her, folding her arms idly in the light morning scarf she wore.

"It never occurred to me, Lydia, until one day, a week or two ago, that any possibility could arise of what you are mentioning. Mr. Raynor's visits here are professional ones. Even when he comes by invitation to dinner, I consider them as partaking of that nature:—to look upon them in any other light never entered my mind. On this



day, however, I saw something that, figuratively speaking, opened my eyes."

"What was it?" asked Lydia.

"It occurred on the day that the Faulkners were to have come to us, and did not. Mr. Raynor dined here in the evening. After dinner I dropped into a doze; there, on the sofa"—pointing to the other end of the room. "When I awoke it was quite dusk; not dark; and Mr. Raynor and Daisy were standing together at this open window; standing very close indeed to each other. Daisy was leaning against him, in fact; and he, I think, had one of her hands in his. You were not in the room."

"It was the evening I had so bad a headache, through vexation at those stupid people not coming!" cried Lydia, angrily. "I had gone upstairs, I suppose, to take my drops. But what did you do, mamma? Order Mr. Raynor from the house?"

"No. Had I acted on my first impulse, I might have done that, Lydia. But some instinct warned me to take time for consideration. I did so. I sat quite still, my head down on the cushion as before, they of course supposing me to be still asleep, and I ran the matter rapidly over in my mind. The decision I came to was, not to speak hastily; not *then*; to take, at any rate, the night for further reflection: so I coughed to let them know I was awake, and said nothing."

"Well?" cried Lydia, impatiently.

"I went over the affair again at night with myself, looking at it from all points, weighing its merits and its demerits, and trying to balance them, one against the other," pursued Mrs. St. Clare. "The result I came to was this, Lydia: to let the matter take its course."

Lydia opened her eyes very widely. "What! to let—to let her marry him?"

"Perhaps. But you jump to conclusions too rapidly, Lydia."

"Why, he is only a common medical practitioner!"

"*There* of course lies the objection: But he is not a 'common' practitioner, Lydia. If he were, do you suppose I should invite him here as I do, and make much of him? He is a gentleman, and the son of a gentleman. In point of fact," added Mrs. St. Clare, in a lower tone, as if the acknowledgment might only be given in a whisper, "our branch of the St. Clare family is little, if any, better than are the Raynors——"

"Mamma, how can you say so?" burst forth Lydia. "It is not true. And the Raynors have always been as poor as church mice."

"And—I was going to say," went on Mrs. St. Clare with calm equanimity—"he is the heir to Eagles' Nest."

Lydia sat back in her chair, a scowl on her brow. She could not contradict that.

"In most cases of this kind there are advantages and disadvantages," quietly spoke Mrs. St. Clare, "and I tried, as I tell you, to put the one against the other, and see which was the weightiest. On the one hand, there is his profession, and his want of high connections; on the other, there is Eagles' Nest, and there are his own personal attractions. You are looking very cross, Lydia. You think, I see, that Daisy might do better."

"Of course she might."

"She might, or she might not," spoke Mrs. St. Clare, impressively. "Marriage used to be called a lottery: but it is a lottery that seems to be getting as scarce now as the real lotteries that the old governments put down. For one girl that marries, half a dozen do not. Is it so, or is it not, Lydia? And it appears to me that the more eligible girls, those who are most worthy to be chosen and who would make the best wives, are generally those who are left. Have you been chosen yet?—forgive me for speaking plainly. No. Yet you have been *waiting* to be chosen—just as other girls wait—for these six or seven years. Daisy may wait in the same manner; wait for ever. We must sacrifice some prejudices in these non-marrying days, Lydia, if we are to get our daughters off at all. If an offer comes, though it may be one that in the old times of pick and choose would have been summarily rejected, it is well to *consider* it in these. And so, you see, my dear, why I am letting matters take their course in regard to Daisy and Mr. Raynor."

"*He* may mean nothing," debated Lydia.

"Neither of them may mean anything, if it comes to that," said Mrs. St. Clare, relapsing into her idly indifferent manner. "It may be just a little flirtation—your own word just now—on both sides; *pour faire passer le temps*."

"And if Daisy loses her heart to him, and nothing comes of it? You have called him attractive yourself."

"Highly attractive," composedly assented Mrs. St. Clare. "As to the rest, it would be no very great calamity that I know of. When once a girl has had a little love affair in early life, and has got over it, she is always the more tractable in regard to eligible offers, should they drop in. No, Lydia, all things considered—and I have well considered them—it is better not to interfere. The matter shall be left to take its course."

"Well, I must say, Daisy ought not to be allowed to drift into love with a rubbishing assistant-surgeon."

"She has already drifted into it, unless I am mistaken," said Mrs. St. Clare, significantly; "has been down deep in it for some time past. My eyes were not opened quickly enough; but since they did open, they have been tolerably observant, Lydia. Why—do you suppose I should wink at their being so much together, unless I intended the matter to go on? Don't they stroll out alone by moonlight and

twilight, in goodness knows what shady walks of the garden, talking sentiment, and looking at the stars and bending over the same flower? Twice that has happened, Lydia, since I have been on the watch: how many times it has happened before, I can't pretend to tell."

Lydia remained silent. It was all true. Where had her own eyes been? Daisy would walk out through the open French window—she remembered it now—and he would stroll out after her: while Mrs. St. Clare would be in her after-dinner doze, and she (Lydia) lying back in her chair with the chest-ache, or upstairs taking her drops. Yes, it was all true. And what an idiot she had been not to see it—not to suspect!

"We cannot have everything; we must, as I say, make sacrifices," resumed Mrs. St. Clare. "I could have wished that Mr. Raynor was not in the medical profession, especially in the lower branch of it. Of course at present he can only be regarded as entirely unsuitable for Daisy: but that will be altered when the Major comes into Eagles' Nest. Frank will then no doubt quit the profession, and ——"

"The singular thing to me is, that he should ever have entered it," interrupted Lydia. "Fancy the heir to Eagles' Nest making himself into a rubbishing apothecary! It is perfectly incongruous."

"It seems so," said Mrs. St. Clare. "I conclude there must have been some particular motive for it. Perhaps the Major thought it well to give him some profession, and when he had acquired it sent him to this remote place to keep him out of mischief. It will be all right, Lydia, when they come into Eagles' Nest. The Major will of course make Frank a suitable allowance as his heir and successor. The Major is already getting in years: Frank will soon come in."

"As to that old Mrs. Atkinson, she must intend to live to be a hundred," remarked Lydia, tartly. "She ought to give up Eagles' Nest to the Major and live elsewhere. If it is the beautiful place that people say, she might be generous enough to let somebody else have a little benefit out of it."

Mrs. St. Clare laughed. "Old people are selfish, Lydia: they prefer their own ease to other people's. I daresay we shall be the same if we live."

From this conversation, it will be gathered that the check thrown upon Frank Raynor's pleasant intercourse with Margaret St. Clare by the unknown calamity (unknown to the world) that had so mysteriously and suddenly happened, had been but transitory. For a week or two afterwards, Frank had paid none but strictly professional visits to the Mount; had just been courteous to its inmates, Daisy included, as a professional man, and no more. He had not danced with Daisy on her birthday; he had not given her any more tender glances, or exchanged a confidential word with her. But, as the first horror of the occurrence began to lose its hold upon his mind, and his temperament

recovered its elasticity, and his sanguine spirits resumed their sway, his lightness and his love returned to him. He was more with Daisy than ever; he *sought* opportunities to be with her now: formerly they had only come in the course of things. And so they were living in an enchanted dream, whose rose-coloured hues seemed as if they could only have come direct from Eden.

And Frank Raynor, never famous for foresight or forethought at the best of times, fell into the belief that Mrs. St. Clare approved of him as a future aspirant for her daughter's hand, and tacitly encouraged their love. That she must see they were intimate with an especial intimacy, and very much together, he knew, and in his sanguine way he drew deductions accordingly. In this he was partly right, as the reader has learnt; but it never entered into his incautious head to suppose that Mrs. St. Clare was counting upon his coming in for future wealth and greatness.

They stood once more together on this same evening, he and Daisy, gazing at the remains of the gorgeous sunset. Dinner over, Daisy had strolled out as usual into the garden; he following her in a minute or two, without leaving excuse or apology behind him. In his assumption of Mrs. St. Clare's tacit encouragement, he believed excuse to be no longer necessary. Clouds of purple and crimson flecked with gold crowded the west; lighting up Daisy's face, as they stood side by side leaning on the low iron gate, with a hue as rosy as the dream they were living in.

"I should like to see the sunsets of Italy," observed Margaret. "It is said they are very beautiful."

"So should I," promptly replied Frank. "Perhaps sometime we may see them together."

Her face took a brighter tint, though there was nothing in the sky to cause it. He passed his hand along the gate, until it rested on hers.

"Mamma talks of going abroad this summer. I do not know whether it will be to Italy."

"I hope she will not take you!"

"It is Lydia's fault. She says this place tires her. And possibly," added Daisy with a sigh, "when once we get abroad, we shall stay there."

"But, my darling, you know that must not be. I could not spare you. Why, Daisy, how could we live apart?"

Her hand, clasped tenderly, lay in his. Her whole frame thrilled as the hand rested there.

"Shall you always stay on at Trennach?" she questioned, in a low tone.

"Stay on at Trennach!" he repeated, in surprise. "I! Why, Daisy, I hope to be very, very soon away from it. I came to my uncle two

years ago, of my own accord, to gain experience. Nothing teaches you that like the drudgery of a general practice : and I was not one of those self-sufficient young students who set up after hospital practice with M.D. on their door-plate, and believe themselves qualified to cure the world. It is kill or cure, haphazard, with some of them."

"And—when you leave Trennach?" she asked, her clear eyes, clear this evening as any amber, gazing out afar as if she would fain see into the future.

"Oh, it will be all right when I leave Trennach ; I shall get along well," returned Frank, in his light, sanguine fashion. "I—I don't care to praise myself, Daisy, but I am clever in my profession ; and a clever man must make his way in it. Perhaps I should purchase a share in a West-End practice in town ; or else set up for myself in that desirable quarter."

The bright hope of anticipation lighted Daisy's beautiful eyes. Frank changed his tone to one of the sweetest melody. At least it sounded so to *her* ear.

"And with one gentle Spirit at my hearth to cheer and guide me, the world will be to me as a long day in Paradise. My best and dearest ! you know what Spirit it is that I covet. Will she say me nay?"

She did not say anything just now ; but the trembling fingers, lying in his hand, entwined themselves confidently within his.

"I know you will get on," she murmured. "You will be great sometime."

"Of course I shall, Daisy. And keep carriages and horses for my darling wife ; and the Queen will knight me when I have gained name and fame ; and—and we shall be happier than the live-long day."

The bright colours in the sky had faded, leaving the grey twilight in their stead. Before them lay the sloping landscape, not a living soul to be seen on it ; immediately behind them was the grove of laurels, shutting them out from view. In this favourable isolation, Frank passed his arm around Daisy's waist, and drew her face to his breast.

"Nothing shall ever separate us, Daisy. Nothing in this world."

"Nothing," she murmured, speaking between his passionate kisses. "I will be yours always and for ever."

"And there will be no trouble," remarked he, in sanguine impulse, as they turned reluctantly away from the gate to regain the house. "I mean no opposition. I am my own master, Daisy, accountable to none ; and your mother has seen our love and sanctions it."

"Oh, do you think she does sanction it?" exclaimed Daisy, drawing a deep breath.

"Why, of course she does," replied Frank, speaking in accordance with his assured belief. "Would Mrs. St. Clare let us linger out together, evening after evening, if she did not see and sanction it?"

No, there will be neither trouble nor impediment. Life lies before us, Daisy, fair as a happy valley."

The tea waited on the table when they went in. Mrs. St. Clare was sleeping still; Lydia looked very cross. Frank glanced at his watch, as if doubting whether he could stay longer.

Daisy's pretty hands, the deep lace, meant to shade them, falling back, began to busy themselves with the tea-cups. It awoke Mrs. St. Clare. She drew her chair at once to the tea-table. Frank pushed Lydia's light couch towards it.

"We were speaking to-day of Eagles' Nest," observed Mrs. St. Clare—and she really did not introduce the subject with any ulterior view; simply as something to talk of. "It is a very nice place, is it not?"

"Very—by all accounts," replied Frank. "I have not seen it."

"Indeed! Is not that strange?"

"My Aunt Atkinson has never invited me there. None of us have been invited, except the Major. And he has not been there for several years."

"How is that? Major Raynor is the next heir."

"Well, I scarcely know how it is. He and Mrs. Atkinson are not very good friends. There was some quarrel, I fancy."

"Mrs. Atkinson must be very old."

"About seventy-four, I believe."

"Not more than that! I thought she was eighty."

"I was saying to-day," put in Lydia, "that those old people ought to give up their estates to the heir. It is unreasonable to keep Major Raynor so long out of his own."

Frank smiled. "He would be very glad if she did, I daresay, Miss St. Clare: but I don't know about the justice of it. Elderly people, as a rule, cling to their homes. I once knew an old lady, who was unexpectedly called upon to give up her home, in which she had lived for very many years, and it killed her. Before the day for turning out came, she was dead."

"At any rate, *you* will not be kept out of it so long when it comes to your turn, Mr. Raynor," remarked Mrs. St. Clare: "for I suppose the Major is nearly as old as Mrs. Atkinson."

Frank's honest blue eyes went straight into those of the speaker, with a questioning glance.

"I beg your pardon: kept out of what?"

"Of Eagles' Nest."

His whole face lighted up with amusement at the mistake she was making.

"I shall never come into Eagles' Nest, Mrs. St. Clare."

"Never come into Eagles' Nest! But the Major comes into it."

"The Major does. But——"

And you are his eldest son."



Frank laughed outright. Freely and candidly he answered—with never a thought of reserve.

"My dear lady, I am not Major Raynor's son, at all. His eldest son is my cousin Charley. It is he who will succeed to Eagles' Nest."

Mrs. St. Clare stared at Frank. "Good heavens!" she murmured under her breath. "You are not the son of Major Raynor?"

"No, I am his nephew. My father was the clergyman."

"I—I have heard Major Raynor call you his son!" she debated, hardly believing her own ears. "He has called you so to my face."

"He often does," laughed Frank. "I fear—he is—proud of me—dear, fond old uncle!"

"Well, I never was so deceived in all my life!" ejaculated Mrs. St. Clare.

## CHAPTER VIII.

### PLANNING OUT THE FUTURE.

It has been already said that there were originally three of the brothers Raynor: Francis, who was an officer in Her Majesty's service; Henry the clergyman; and Hugh the doctor. The youngest of these, Hugh, was the first to marry by several years; the next to marry was Henry. Henry might have married earlier, but could not afford it: he waited until a living was given to him. In the pretty country Rectory attached to his church, he and his wife lived for one brief year of their married life: and then she died, leaving him a little boy-baby, who was named Francis after the clergyman's eldest brother. Some ten years subsequently the Reverend Henry Raynor himself died: and the little boy was an orphan, possessed of just sufficient means to educate him and give him a start in life in some not too costly profession. He chose that of medicine, as his Uncle Hugh had done before him.

The eldest of the three was the last to marry: Captain Raynor. He and his young wife led rather a scrambling sort of life for some years afterwards, always in a puzzle how to make both ends of their straitened income meet: and then a slice of good fortune (as the Captain regarded it) befell him. Some distant relative left him an annuity of five hundred a year. Five hundred a year certain, in addition to his pay, seemed like riches to the Captain: while his unsophisticated and not too-well-managing wife thought they were clear of shoals for life.

Very close upon this, the Captain shot up a step in rank, and obtained his majority. This was succeeded by a very long and severe attack of illness; and the Major, too hastily deciding that he should

never be again fit for active service, sold out. He and his wife settled down in a pretty cottage-villa called Spring Lawn, in the neighbourhood of Bath, bringing up their children there in much the same scrambling sort of fashion that they had previously lived. No order, no method; all good-hearted carelessness, good-natured improvidence. Just as it had been in their earlier days, so it was now: they never knew where to look for a shilling of ready money. That it would be so all through life with Major Raynor, whatever might be the amount of his income, was pretty certain: he was sanguine, off-hand, naturally improvident. The proceeds from the sale of his commission had all vanished, chiefly in paying back debts; the five hundred a year was all they had to live upon, and that five hundred would die with the Major: and, in short, they seemed to be worse off now than before the annuity came. Considering that they spent considerably more than the five hundred yearly, and yet had no comfort to show for it, and that debts had gathered again over the Major's head, it was little to be wondered at that they were not well off. The Major never gave a thought to consequences: debt sat as lightly upon him as though it had been a wreath of laurel leaves. If he did feel slightly worried at times, what mattered it: he should, sooner or later, come into Eagles' Nest, when all things would be smooth as glass. A more prudent man than the Major might have seen cause to entertain a doubt of the absolute certainty of the estate coming to him. He did not: he looked upon the inheritance of it as sure and certain.

The reader has probably not forgotten Mr. and Mrs. Timothy Atkinson—at whose house Edina had stayed so many years ago. Changes had taken place since then. Both the partners in the bank (they were not brothers, but second cousins) were dead: the firm had long been Atkinson and Street. For, upon the death of the two old men, Mr. George Atkinson, their sole successor, took his managing clerk, Edwin Street, into partnership. The bank was not one of magnitude—I think this has been already said—only a small private one. The acting head of it was, to all intents and purposes, Edwin Street: for Mr. George Atkinson passed the greater portion of his time abroad, making a visit home only every two or three years. He was well off, and did not choose to worry himself with the cares of business: had the bank been given up to-morrow, he would have had plenty of money without it.

During his later life, Mr. Timothy Atkinson had invested the chief portion of his savings in the purchase of an estate in Kent, called Eagles' Nest. He was not a rich man, as bankers go, never having been an equal partner in the firm; drawing from it in fact but a small share. His death at the last was somewhat sudden, and occurred during one of his sojourns at Eagles' Nest. Mrs. Atkinson, his widow; not less portly than of yore, and still much of an invalid; summoned

her two brothers to attend the funeral : Major Raynor from Bath, Dr. Raynor from Trennach. The Major went up at once : Dr. Raynor sent a refusal ; his plea of excuse being that he could not leave his patients, the season being one of unusual sickness. This refusal Mrs. Atkinson, never a very genial-natured woman, or at all cordial with her brothers, resented.

When Mr. Timothy Atkinson's will was opened, it was found that he had left everything he possessed to his wife unconditionally. Consequently the estate was now at her own disposal. Though a pretty, compact property, it was not a large one : worth some two thousand a year, but capable of great improvement.

On the day following the funeral, Mrs. Atkinson went up to her house in London, the Major accompanying her. There she found George Atkinson, who had just arrived in England ; which was to her an agreeable surprise. He had always been a favourite of hers, and he would be useful to her just now.

"I shall leave it to you, George," she suddenly observed one morning a few days subsequent to this, as they sat together looking over letters and papers.

"Leave what to me, aunt ?" For he had taken to call her "aunt" as a child, and did so still.

"Eagles' Nest."

George Atkinson laid down the bundle of letters he was untying, and looked questioningly at the old lady, almost as though he doubted her words.

"I am sure, aunt, you cannot mean that."

"Why can't I mean it, pray ?"

"Because it is a thing that you must not think of doing. You have near relatives in your brothers. It is they who should benefit by your will."

"My brothers can't both inherit the place," retorted the old lady.

"The elder of them can—Major Raynor."

"I like you better, George, than I like him."

"I am very glad that you should like me—but not that your liking for me should render you unjust to your family," he returned, firmly but gently. "Indeed, dear Mrs. Atkinson, it would be an act of great injustice if you were to prefer me to them."

"My will ought to be made at once," said the old lady.

"Certainly. And I hope you will not as much as mention my name in it," he added with a smile. "I have so very much of my own, you know, that a bequest from you would be superfluous."

The conversation decided Mrs. Atkinson. She sent for her lawyer, John Street, and had her will drawn up in favour of Major Raynor. Legacies to a smaller or larger amount were bequeathed to a few people, but to Major Raynor was left Eagles' Nest. Her brother Hugh, poor

Dr. Raynor of Trennach, was not mentioned in it: neither was Edina.

The will was made in duplicate: Mrs. Atkinson desired her solicitor to retain possession of one copy; the other she handed to Major Raynor. She affixed her own seal to the envelope in which the will was enclosed, but allowed him first to read it over.

"I don't know how to thank you, aunt, for this," said he, the tears of genuine emotion resting on his eyelashes. "It will be good news for Mary and the young ones."

"Well, I'm told it's the right thing to do, Frank," answered the old lady: who was older than any of her brothers, and had liked to domineer over them in early life.

So Major Raynor went home to Spring Lawn with the will in his pocket, and considered that from that hour all his embarrassments were over. And Mrs. Atkinson gave up her house in London, and stationed herself for life at Eagles' Nest. While George Atkinson, after a month's sojourn, went abroad again.

But now, as ill-fortune had it, Major Raynor had chanced, since that lucky day, to offend his sister. The year following the making of the will, being in London on some matter of business, he took the opportunity to go down to Eagles' Nest—and went without asking permission, or sending word. Whether that fact displeased Mrs. Atkinson, or whether she really did not care to see him at all, certain it was, that she was very cross and crabbed, her temper almost unbearable. The Major had a hot temper himself on occasion, and they came to an issue. A sharp quarrel ensued; and the Major, impulsive in all he did, quitted Eagles' Nest there and then. When he reached Spring Lawn, after staying another week in London to complete his business, he found a letter awaiting him from his sister, telling him that she had altered her will and left Eagles' Nest to Mr. George Atkinson.

"Stupid old thing!" exclaimed the Major, laughing at what he looked upon as an idle threat. "As if she'd do such a thing as that!" For the Major had never had the remotest idea that she had once intended to make George Atkinson her heir.

And from that hour to this, the Major had not once seriously thought of the letter again. He had never since seen Mrs. Atkinson; had never but once heard from her; but he looked upon Eagles' Nest as being as certainly his, as though it were already in his possession. Once every year, at Christmas time, he wrote his sister a letter of good wishes; to which she did not respond. "Ann never went in for civilities," would observe the Major.

The one exception was this. When his eldest son, Charles, had attained his sixteenth year, the Major mentioned the fact in his annual letter to his sister. A few days afterwards, down came an answer from her of some half-dozen lines: in which she briefly offered Charles an

opening (as she called it) in life : meaning, a clerkship in the bank of Atkinson and Street, which her interest would procure for him. Master Charles, who had far higher notions, as befitted the heir to Eagles' Nest, threw up his head in disdain : and the Major wrote a letter of non-acceptance, as brief as the old lady's offer. With that exception, they had never heard from her.

The Major and his wife were both incredibly improvident ; he in spending money ; she in not knowing how to save it. Yielding and gentle, Mrs. Raynor fell in with anything and everything done by her husband, thinking that because he did it, it must be right. She never suggested to him that they might save cost here, and cut it off there ; that this outlay would be extravagant, or that unneeded. There are some women really not capable of forethought, and Mrs. Raynor was one of them. As to doing anything to advance their own self-interest, by cultivating Mrs. Atkinson's favour, both were too single-minded for such an act.

It was with them, his uncle and aunt, that Frank Raynor had spent his holidays when a boy, and all his subsequent intervals of leisure. They were just as fond of Frank as they were of their own children : he was ever welcome. The Major sometimes called him "my son Frank," when speaking of him with strangers ; very often indeed "my eldest boy." As to taking people in by so doing, the Major had no such thought ; but there is no doubt that it did cause many a one, not acquainted with the actual relationship, to understand and believe that Frank was *bonâ fide* the Major's son. Possibly their names being the same—Francis—contributed to add to the impression. Amongst those who had caught up the belief, was Mrs. St. Clare. She had occasionally met the Major and Mrs. Raynor in Bath, though the acquaintance-ship was of the slightest. When her son, young St. Clare, came into possession of the Mount, and it was known that she was going to remove there, the Major, meeting her one day near the old pump-room, said to her, in the openness of his heart, "I'll write to Trennach to my boy Frank and tell him to make himself useful to you." "Oh," returned Mrs. St. Clare, "have you a boy at Trennach?" "Yes, the eldest of them : he is with his uncle the Doctor," concluded the Major, unsuspectingly. Had he thought it would have created mischief, or even a false impression, he would have swallowed the pump-room, pump and all, before he had spoken it. That the Major was the presumptive heir to Eagles' Nest was well known : and Mrs. St. Clare may be excused for having, under the circumstances, carried with her to her new abode the undoubted belief that Frank would succeed him in the estate.

On the night that the enlightenment took place—when Frank, so candidly and carelessly, disabused Mrs. St. Clare's mind of the impression existing there—he perceived not the chill that the avowal evidently gave her. That it should affect her cordiality to him he never could have



feared. A more worldly nature or a selfish one would have seen in a moment that his non-heirship to Eagles' Nest rendered him a less eligible parti for Margaret; but Frank Raynor was in worldliness, as in selfishness, singularly deficient. And he quitted the Mount when tea was over, quite unconscious that anything had occurred to diminish the favour in which he was held by its mistress.

Not with that was his mind occupied as he walked home; but rather with thoughts of the future. Daisy was to be his; she had promised it; and Frank would have taken her to him to-morrow, could he have provided her with bread-and-cheese. How to do this—at least, what would be the best means of doing it—was puzzling his brain now.

He took the road home over the Bare Plain. Never, since the enactment of that fatal tragedy, had Frank Raynor taken it by choice: he always chose the highway. But to-night he had a patient lying ill in the cottages on the Plain; and Dr. Raynor had said to him, Call in and see Weston, Frank, as you return. The visit paid, he continued his way homewards. It was a light night: there were neither stars nor moon: but a light haze seemed to shade the sky, and served to light up objects. Frank looked towards the Bottomless Shaft as he passed it; his fascinated eyes turning to it of their own accord. Bringing them back with an effort and a shudder, he went onwards at a quicker pace.

"Will it lie there hidden for ever?" he said to himself half aloud. "Pray Heaven that it may!"

Dr. Raynor was sitting in the small room behind his surgery, a room kept chiefly for private consultations with patients; in his hand was a medical journal which he was reading by lamplight. He put it down when Frank entered.

"I want to ask you something, Uncle Hugh," began Frank, impulsively, as though what he was about to say had been weighing on his mind. "Should I have any difficulty, do you think, in dropping into a practice when I leave you?"

"You do mean to leave me, then, Frank?" returned Dr. Raynor, without immediately replying to the question.

"Why, of course I do, Uncle Hugh," said Frank, in slight surprise. "It was always so intended. I came here, you know, for two years, and I have stayed longer."

"And you would not like to stay altogether, and be my partner and successor?"

"No," replied Frank, very promptly. "It would be but a poor living for two people; my share of it very poor, for I could not expect you to give me half. And there are other reasons against it. No, Uncle Hugh, what I want to do is, to jump into some snug little practice in a place where I shall get on. Say in London."



A smile crossed the more experienced Doctor's lips. Young men are so sanguine.

"It is not very easy to 'jump into a snug little practice,' Frank."

"I know that, sir : but there are two ways in which it may be done. One way is, to purchase a share in an established practice ; another, to set up well in some likely situation, with a good house and a plate on the door, and all that, and wait for patients to drop in."

"But each of those ways-requires money, Frank."

"Oh, of course," acquiesced Frank, with light carelessness, as though money were the most ordinary commodity on earth.

"Well, Frank, where would you get the money from ?"

"That's what I want to ask you about, Uncle Hugh. I daresay you remember that when there was so much talk about that will of my Aunt Ann's, it was said that I had a share in it."

"Indeed, Frank, I don't. I remember I was told that she had not left anything to me ; and I really remember no more."

"Then you cannot tell me what the amount was?" exclaimed Frank, in an accent of disappointment. "It was that I wanted to ask you."

Dr. Raynor shook his head in the negative. "I have no idea, Frank, whether it was one pound or one thousand. Or many thousands."

"You see, sir, if I knew the exact amount of the sum, I could think upon my plans with more certainty."

"Just so, Frank. As it is, your plans must be somewhat like castles in the air."

"I recollect quite well Uncle Francis telling me that I came in for a good slice. That was the phrase : 'in for a good slice.' He had read the will, you know."

"All I recollect, or know, about it, is, that Francis wrote me word nothing was left to me. He said he had remonstrated with Ann—with your aunt—at leaving my name out of the will, but she ordered him, in reply, to mind his own business. I do not care for it myself ; I do not, I am sure, covet any of the money Ann may leave : though I could have wished she had not quite passed over Edina."

"She must have a good deal of money, Uncle Hugh, apart from Eagles' Nest."

"I daresay she has."

"And, if Uncle Francis comes in for that money, I should think he would make over the half of it to you. I should, were I in his place."

"Ah, Frank," smiled the Doctor, "people are not so chivalrously generous in this world : even brothers."

"I should call it justice, not generosity, sir."

"If you come to talk of justice, you would also be entitled to your share, as Henry's son. He was equally her brother."

"But I don't expect anything of the kind," said Frank. "Provided I have enough to set me up in practice, that's all I care for."

"You would not have that until your aunt dies."

"To be sure not. I am not expecting it before. But what has struck me is this, Uncle Hugh—I have been turning the thing over in my mind as I walked home—that I might, without any dishonour, *reckon* upon the money now."

"In what way? How do you mean?"

"Suppose I go to some old-established man in London who, from some cause or other—advancing years, say—requires some one to relieve him of a portion of his daily work. I say to him, 'Will you take me at present as your assistant, at a fair salary, and when I come into my money'—naming the sum—'I will hand that over to you and become your partner?' Don't you think that seems feasible, sir?"

"I daresay it does, Frank."

"But then, you see, to do this, I ought to know the exact sum that is coming to me. Unless I were able to state that, I should not be listened to. That's why, sir, I was in hopes that you could inform me what it was."

"And so I would if I knew it, Frank. I do not think Francis mentioned to me that you would come in for anything. I feel sure he did not, or I should remember it."

"That's awkward," mused Frank, thoughtfully balancing on his right-hand fingers the paper-knife which he had caught up from the table. "I wonder he did not tell you, Uncle Hugh."

"To say the truth, so do I," replied Dr. Raynor. "It would have been good news: and he knows that I am equally interested with himself in the welfare of Henry's orphan son. Are you sure, Frank, that you are making no mistake in this?"

"I don't think I am. I was staying at Spring Lawn when the Major came home from Aunt Atkinson's after her husband's death, and he brought her will with him. He was telling us all about it—that Eagles' Nest was to be his, and that there were several legacies, and he turned to me and said, 'You come in for a good slice, Frank.' I recollect it all, sir, as though it had taken place but yesterday."

"Did he mention what the 'slice' was? How much?"

"No, he did not. And I did not like to ask him."

There was a pause. Dr. Raynor began putting the papers straight on the table, his usual custom before leaving them for the night. Frank had apparently gone into a reverie.

"Uncle Hugh," he cried, briskly, lifting his head, his face glowing with some thought, his frank blue eyes bright with it, "if you can spare me for a couple of days, I will go to Spring Lawn and ask Uncle Francis. I should like to be at some certainty."

"I could spare you, Frank: there's nothing particular on hand that I cannot attend to myself for that short time. But ——"

"Thank you, Uncle Hugh," interrupted Frank, impetuously. "Then suppose I start to-morrow morning?"

"But—I was about to inquire—what is it that has put all this into your head so suddenly?"

Frank's eager eyes, raised to the Doctor's face, fell at the question. A half-conscious smile parted his lips.

"There's no harm, sir, in trying to plan out one's future."

"None in the world, Frank. I only ask the reason of your setting about it in this—as it seems to me—sudden manner."

"Well—you know, Uncle Hugh—I—I may be marrying sometime."

"And you have been fixing on the lady, I see, Frank!"

A whole smile now upon Frank's face. He was sending the paper-knife round in circles on the table, with rather an unnecessary noise. Dr. Raynor's thoughts were going hither and thither: he could not recall any individual in all the neighbourhood of Trennach likely to be honoured by Frank's choice. In an instant an idea flashed over him—and he did not like it.

"Frank! can it be that you are thinking of one of the Miss St. Clares?"

"And if I were, sir?"

"Then—I fear—that there may be trouble in store for you," said the Doctor, gravely. "Mrs. St. Clare would never sanction it."

"But she has sanctioned it, Uncle Hugh. She sanctions it every day of her life."

"Has she told you so?"

"Not in words. But she sees how much I and Daisy are together, and she allows it. *That* will be all right, Uncle Hugh."

"Daisy? Let me see? Oh, that is the young one: she is a nice little girl. I cannot say I like the elder. But ——"

"But what, sir?"

"You are by nature over-sanguine, Frank; and I cannot help thinking that you are so in this. Rely upon it, there is some mistake: Mrs. St. Clare is a proud, haughty woman, remarkably alive, unless I am mistaken, to self-interest. She would not be likely to give a daughter to one whose prospects are so uncertain as yours."

"But I am wishing to make my prospects more certain, you see, uncle. And I can assure you, she approves of me for Daisy."

"Well, well; if so, I am glad to hear it. Nevertheless it surprises me. I should have supposed she would look in a higher rank for suitors for her daughters. The little girl is a nice girl, I say, Frank, and you have my best wishes."

"Thank you, Uncle Hugh," warmly repeated Frank, rising, his whole face flushing with pleasure as he met the Doctor's hand. "Of course

you understand that it must not yet be talked of : I must speak to Mrs. St. Clare first."

"I shall not be likely to talk of it," replied Dr. Raynor.

## CHAPTER IX.

### MAJOR AND MRS. RAYNOR.

THE windows of Spring Lawn stood open to the afternoon sun. It was a small, pretty white house, half cottage, half villa, situated about three miles from Bath. A latticed portico, over which crept the white-blossomed clematis, led into a miniature hall : Major Raynor could just turn round in it. On either side was a small sitting-room, the dining-room on the left, the drawing-room on the right.

The scrambling mid-day dinner was over. Somehow all the meals seemed to be scrambling ones at the Major's, from the utter want of order. Unless Edina was there to maintain it : and that was but a chance event : a brief and rare interlude, occurring at long intervals in life. Some wine stood on the old red-and-blue checked table-cover, with a plate of biscuits. On one side of the table sat the Major : a tall and very portly man with a bald head and a white moustache, looking every day of his nine-and-sixty years. He had been getting on for fifty when he married his young wife ; who was not quite eight-and-thirty yet : a delicate, fragile-looking woman, with a small fair face and gentle voice, mild blue eyes, a pink colour, and thin light brown hair quietly braided back from it. Mrs. Raynor looked what she was : a yielding, amiable, helpless woman ; one who could never be strong-minded in any emergency whatever, but somehow one to be loved at first sight.

She sat sideways to the table—as indeed did the Major opposite, their faces turned to the window—her feet on a footstool, and her hands busy with work, apparently a new frock she was making for one of her younger children. She wore a faded muslin gown, green its predominant colour ; a score of pins, pertaining to the work in process, sticking in her waistband.

They were talking of the weather. The Major was generally in a state of heat. To-day he had walked into Bath and back again, and got in late for dinner, puffing and steaming, for it was up-hill. He liked to have a fly one way at least ; but he had not always the money in his pocket to pay for it.

"Yes, it was like an oven in the sun, Mary," continued he, enlarging upon the weather. "I don't remember any one single year that the heat has come upon us so early."

"That's why I have a good deal of sewing to do just now," observed Mrs. Raynor. "We have had to take to our summer things before

they were ready. Look at poor dear little Robert! The child must be melted in that stuff frock."

"What's the nurse about?—can't she make him one?" asked the Major.

"Oh, Francis, she has so much to do. With all these children! She does some sewing; but she has not time for much."

The Major, sipping his wine just then, looked over the rim of his glass at the children, sitting on the grass-plat. Four of them, in whose ages there was evidently more than the ordinary difference between brothers and sisters. One looked like a nearly grown-up young lady. That was Alice. She wore a washed-out cotton dress and a frayed black silk apron. Alfred was the next, aged ten, in an old brown holland blouse and tumbled hair. Kate, in another washed-out cotton and a pinafore, was eight: and Robert was just turned three, a chubby, fat child in a thick woollen plaid frock. They were stemming cowslips to make balls, and were as happy as the day was long.

"I saw Mrs. Manners in Bath this morning," resumed the Major. "She says she is coming to spend a long day here."

"I hope she'll not come until Bobby's new frock is finished," said Mrs. Raynor, her fingers plying the needle more swiftly at the thought. "He looks so shabby in that old thing."

"As if it mattered? Who cares what children have on?"

"Oh I forgot to tell you, Francis—the butcher asked to see me this morning: he came over for orders himself. He says he must have some money."

"Oh, does he?" returned the Major, with careless unconcern. "I don't know when I shall have any for him, I'm sure. Did you tell him so?"

"I did not go to him: I sent Charley. I do hope he will not stop the meat!"

"As if he would do that!" cried the Major, throwing up his head with a beaming smile. "He knows I shall come into plenty of money sooner or later."

At this moment the children came rushing with one accord to the window, and stood—those who were tall enough—with their arms on its sill, Alice with the cowslips gathered up in her apron. Little Robert—often called Baby—who toddled up last, could only stretch his hands up to the edge of the sill.

"Mamma—papa," said Alice, a graceful girl, with the clearly-cut Raynor features and her mother's mild blue eyes, "we want to have a little party and a feast of strawberries and cream. It would be so delightful out here on the grass, with tables and chairs, and ——"

"The strawberries are not in yet," interrupted the Major. "Except those in the expensive shops."

"When they are in, we mean, papa. Shall we?"

"To be sure," said papa, as pleased with the idea as were the children. "Perhaps we could borrow a cow and make some syllabubs!"

Back ran the children, to fall on the grass again, and plan out pleasure for the anticipated feast. Alice was seventeen; but in mind and manners she was still very much of a child. As they quitted the window, the room door opened, and a tall, slender, well-dressed stripling entered. It was the eldest son, Charles Raynor. He also had the well-formed features of the Raynor family, dark eyes and dark chestnut hair; altogether a very nice-looking young man.

"Why, Charley, I thought you were out!"

"I have been lying down under the tree at the back, finishing my book," said Charley. "And now I am going into Bath to change it."

It was the greatest pity—at least most sensible people would have deemed it so—to see a fine, capable young fellow wasting the best days of his existence. This, the period of his dawning manhood, was the time when he ought to have been at work, preparing to run his career in this working world. Instead of that, he was passing it in absolute idleness. Well for him that he had no vice in his nature: or the old proverb, about idle hands and Satan and mischief, might have been exemplified in him. All the reproach that could at present be cast on him was, that he was utterly useless, thoroughly idle: and perhaps he was not to blame for it, as nothing had been given him to do.

Charles Raynor was brought up to no profession, or business. Various callings had been talked of now and again in a desultory manner; but Major and Mrs. Raynor, in their easy-going negligence, had brought nothing to pass. As the heir to Eagles' Nest, they deemed he would not require to exercise his talents on the score of means: Charles himself decidedly deemed so. Gratuitous commissions in the army did not seem to be coming Major Raynor's way; he had not the means to purchase one: and, truth to tell, Charles's inclinations did not tend to fighting. The same drawback, want of money, applied to other possibilities: and so, Charles had been allowed to remain unprofitably at home, doing nothing; very much to his own satisfaction. If obliged to choose some profession for himself, he would have fixed on the Bar: but, first of all, he wanted to go to one of the two universities. Everything was to be done, in every way, when Eagles' Nest dropped in: *that* would be the panacea for all present ills. Meanwhile, Major Raynor was content to let the time slip easily away unheeded, until that desirable consummation should arrive, and to allow his son to let it slip away easily too.

"Charley, I wish you'd bring me back a Madeira cake, if you are going into Bath."

All right, mamma."



"And, Charley," added the Major, "just call in at Steer's and get those seeds for the garden."

"Very well," said Charley. "Will they let me have the things without the money?"

"Oh yes. They'll put them down."

Charley gave a brush to his coat in the little hall, put on his hat, and started, book in hand. As he was passing the children, they plied him with questions: where he was going, and what to do.

"To the library to change my book."

"Oh, I'll go too!" cried Alfred, jumping to his feet. "Let me go with you, Charley!"

"I don't mind," said Charley. "You'll carry the book. How precious hot it is! Take care you don't get a sunstroke, Alice."

Alice hastily pulled her old straw hat over her forehead, and went on with her work at the cowslips. "Charley, do you think you could bring me back a new crochet-needle?" she asked. "I'll give you the old one for the size."

"Hand it over," said Charley. "I shall have to bring back all Bath if I get many more orders. I say, youngster, you don't think, I hope, that you are going with me in that trim!"

Alfred looked down at his blouse, and at the rent in the hem of his trousers.

"What shall I put on, Charley? My Sunday clothes? I won't be a minute."

The boy ran into the house, and Charles strolled leisurely towards the little gate. He reached it just in time to meet some one who was entering. One moment's pause to gaze at each other, and then their hands were clasped.

"Frank!"

"Charley!"

"How surprised I am! Come in. You are about the last fellow I should have expected to see."

Frank laughed gaily. He enjoyed taking them by surprise in this way; enjoyed the gladness shining from their eyes at sight of him, the hearty welcome.

"I daresay I am. How are you all, Charley? There are the young ones, I see! Is that Alice? She *has* grown!"

Alice came bounding to meet him, dropping the yellow blossoms from her apron. They had not seen him since the previous Christmas twelvemonth, when he had spent a week at Spring Lawn. Little Robert did not know him, and stood back, shyly staring.

"And is this my dear little Bob?" cried Frank, catching him up and kissing him. "Why, he has grown into a man! Does he remember brother Frank? And—why, there's mamma!—and papa! come along."

The child still in his arms, he went on to meet Major and Mrs. Raynor, who were hastening forth with outstretched hands of greeting.

"This sight is better than gold!" cried the Major. "How are you, my dear boy?"

"We thought we were never to see you again," put in Mrs. Raynor. "How good of you to come!"

"I am come to take just a peep at you all. It seems ages since I was here."

"Are you come for a month?"

"A month!" laughed Frank. "For two days."

"Oh! Nonsense!"

And so the bustle and the greetings continued. Major Raynor poured him out a glass of wine, though Frank protested it was too hot for wine, especially after his walk from Bath. Mrs. Raynor went to see her cook about sending in something substantial with the tea. Charles put off his walk, and the young ones seduced Frank to the grass plat to help with the cowslip balls.

And Frank never gave the slightest intimation that he had come from Trennach for any purpose, save that of seeing them. But at night, when bedtime came and Mrs. Raynor went upstairs, leaving the Major, as usual, to finish his glass and pipe, Frank drew his chair up as though he meant to stay too.

"You can go on without me, Charley, or remain; just as you like. I want to say a few words to my uncle."

He then disclosed the real purport of his visit—namely, the ascertaining from Major Raynor what was the amount of money coming to him under Mrs. Atkinson's will. Explaining at the same time why he wished to ascertain this: his intention to get into practice in London, and his ideas for accomplishing it. Just as he had explained the matter to Dr. Raynor at Trennach, the previous night.

"You see, Uncle Francis, it is time I was getting a start in life," he urged. "I am midway between twenty and thirty. I don't care to remain an assistant-surgeon longer."

"Of course you don't," said the Major, gently puffing away. "Help yourself, Frank."

"Not any more, thank you, uncle. And so, as the first preliminary step, I want you to tell me, if you have no objection, what the sum is that Aunt Ann has put me down for."

"Can't recollect a bit, Frank."

"But—don't you think this idea of mine is a good one?—the getting some well-established man to take me in on the strength of this money?" asked Frank, eagerly. "I cannot see any other chance of setting up."

"It's a capital idea," said the Major, taking a good draught of whiskey-and-water.

"Well, then, Uncle Francis, I hope you will not object to tell me what the amount is."

"My boy, I'd tell you at once if I knew it. I don't recollect it the least in the world."

"Not recollect it!" exclaimed Frank.

"No, I don't."

It was a check for Frank. His good-natured face looked rather blank. Charley, who had chosen to remain, sat nursing his knee and listening.

"Could you not recollect it if you tried, uncle?"

"I am trying," said the Major. "My thoughts are back in the matter now. Let me see—what were the terms of the will? I know I had Eagles' Nest; and—yes—I think I am right—I was also named residuary legatee. Yes, I was. That much I do remember."

Frank's face broke into smiles. "It would be strange if you forgot *that*, uncle. Try and remember some more."

"Let me see," repeated the Major, passing his unoccupied hand over his bald head. "There were several legacies, I know; and I think—yes, I do think, Frank—your name stood first on the list of them. But, dash me, if I can recollect for how much."

"Was it for pounds, or hundreds, or thousands?" questioned Frank.

"That's what I can't tell. Hang it all! my memory's not worth a rush now. When folks get old, Frank, their memory fails them."

"I remember the words you said to me at the time, Uncle Francis: they were that I came in for a good slice."

"Did I? When?"

"When you came back from London, and were telling my aunt about the will. I was present: it was in this very room. 'You come in for a good slice, Frank,' you said, turning round to me."

"Didn't I say how much?"

"No. And I did not much like to ask you. Of course you knew how much it was?"

"Of course I did. I read the will."

"I wish you could remember."

"I wish I could, Frank. I ought to. I'll sleep upon it, and perhaps it will come to me in the morning."

"Where is the will?" asked Charles, speaking for the first time.

"Don't you hold it, papa?"

Major Raynor took his long pipe from his mouth, and turned the end towards an old-fashioned, imitation walnut bureau, that stood by the side of the fireplace. The upper part of it was his own, and was always kept locked; the lower part consisted of three drawers, which were used indiscriminately by Mrs. Raynor and the children.

"It's in there," said the Major. "I put it there when I brought it home, and I've never looked at it since."

As if the thought suddenly came to him to look at it then, he put his pipe in the fender, took a bunch of keys from his pocket, and unlocked the bureau. It disclosed some pigeon-holes above, some small, shallow drawers beneath them, three on each side, and one deeper drawer in the middle. Selecting another key, he unlocked this last, pulled the drawer quite out, and put it on the table. Two sealed parchments lay within it.

"Ay, this is it," said the Major, selecting one of them. "See, here's the superscription: 'Will of Mistress Ann Atkinson.' And that is my own will," he added, nodding to the other. "See, Charley: you'll know where to find it in case of need. Not that any of you would be much the better for it, my lad, as things are at present. They will be different with us when Eagles' Nest comes in."

Frank had taken the packet from the Major's hand, and was looking at the seal: a large red seal, with an imposing impression.

"I suppose you would not like to open this will, uncle? Would it be wrong to do so?"

The Major shook his head, slowly but decisively. "I can't open it, Frank. Although I know its contents—at least, I did once know them—to open it would seem like a breach of confidence. Your Aunt Ann sealed the will herself in my presence, after I had read it. 'Don't let it be opened, Francis, until my death,' she said, as she handed it to me. And so, you see, I should not like to do it."

"Of course not," readily spoke Frank, "I could not wish you to do so. Perhaps, uncle, you will, as you say, recollect more when you have slept upon it."

"Ay, perhaps so. I have an idea, mind you, Frank, that it was a very good slice; a substantial sum."

"What should you call substantial?" asked Frank, with a smile.

"Two or three thousand pounds."

"I do hope it was!" returned Frank, his face beaming. "I could move the world with all that."

But the Major did not return the smile. Sundry experiences of his own were obtruding themselves on his memory.

"We are all apt to think so, my boy. But nobody knows, until they try it, how quickly a sum of ready money melts. While you are saying I'll do this with it, or I'll do that—hey, presto! it is gone. And you sit looking blankly at your empty hands, and wonder what you've spent it in."

Taking the drawer, with the two wills in it, he put it back in its place, locking it and the bureau safely as before. And then he went up to bed to "sleep upon it," and try and get back his recollection as to an item that one of those wills contained.

Morning came. One of the same hot and glorious days that the few last had been: and the window was thrown open to the

breakfast-table. The children, in their somewhat dilapidated attire, but with their fresh, fair, healthy faces and happy tempers, sat round it eating piles of bread-and-butter, and eggs ad libitum. Mrs. Raynor, in the same faded muslin gown that she had worn the day before, presided over a dish of sliced ham, while Alice poured out the coffee. It seemed natural to Mrs. Raynor that she should take the part, no matter at what, that gave her the least trouble : kind, loving, gentle, she always was, but very incapable.

The Major was not present. The Major liked to lie in bed rather late in a morning ; which was not good for him. But for his indolent habits, he need not have been quite so stout. Frank Raynor glanced at the bureau, opposite to him as he sat, and wondered whether his uncle had recollected more about the one desired item of the will within it during his sleep.

"Has Uncle Francis had a good night, aunt?" asked Frank, who was inwardly just as impatient as he could be for news, and perhaps thought he might gather some idea by the question.

"My dear, he always sleeps well," said Mrs. Raynor. "Too well, I think. It is not good for a man of his age."

"How can a man sleep too well, mamma?" cried one of the children.

"Well, my darlings, I judge by the snoring. Poor papa snores dreadfully in his sleep."

"Will he be long before he's down, do you suppose, Aunt Mary?"

"I hear him getting up, Frank. He is early this morning because you are here."

And, indeed, in a minute or two the Major entered : his flowery silk dressing-gown—all the worse for wear, like the children's clothes—flowing around him, his hearty voice sending forth its greeting. For some little time the children kept up an incessant fire of questions ; Frank could not get one in. But his turn came.

"Have you remembered that, Uncle Francis, now that you have slept upon it?"

The Major looked across the table. Just for the moment he did not speak. Frank went on eagerly.

"Sometimes things that have dropped out of our memory come back to us in a dream. I have heard of instances. Did it chance so to you last night, uncle?"

"My dear boy, I dreamt a great big shark with open jaws was running after me, and I could not get out of the water."

"Then—have you not recollected anything?"

"I fear not, Frank. I shall see as the day goes on."

But the day went on, and no recollection upon the point came back to Major Raynor. He "slept upon it" a second night, and still with the same result.

"I am very sorry, my boy," he said, grasping Frank's hand at parting, as they stood alone together on the grass plat for a moment. "Goodness knows, I'd tell you if I could. Should the remembrance come to me later—and I daresay it will: I don't see why it should not—I'll write off at once to you at Trennach. Meanwhile, you may safely count on one thing—that the sum's a large one."

"You think so?" said Frank.

"I do more than think so: I'm next door to sure of it. It's in the thousands. Yes, I feel certain of that."

"And so will I, then, uncle, in my own mind." It would have been strange had Frank, with his ultra-sanguine nature, not thought so, thus encouraged. "I can be laying out my plans accordingly."

"That you may safely do. And look here, Frank, my boy: even should it turn out that I'm mistaken—though I know I am not," continued the open-hearted Major, "I can make it up to you. As residuary legatee—and I do remember that much correctly now—I shall come into many thousands of ready money; and some of it shall be yours if you want it."

"How good you are, uncle!" cried Frank, his deep blue eyes shining forth their gratitude.

"And I'll tell you something more, my boy. Though I hardly like to speak of it," added the Major, dropping his voice, "and I've never mentioned it at home: for it would seem as though I were looking out for poor Ann's death, which I'd not do for the world. Neither would you, Frank."

"Certainly not, Uncle Francis. What is it?"

"Well, I had a letter the other day on some business of my own from Street the lawyer. He chanced to mention in it that he had been down to Eagles' Nest: and he added in a postscript that he was shocked to see the change in your Aunt Ann. In fact, he intimated that a very short period of time must bring the end. So you perceive, Frank, my boy—though, as I say, it sounds wrong and mean to speak of it—you may go back quite at your ease; for all the money you require will speedily be yours."

And Frank Raynor went back accordingly, feeling as certain of the good fortune coming to him, as though it had been told down before his eyes in golden guineas.

*(To be continued.)*



## KETIRA THE GIPSY.

"I TELL you what it is, Abel. You think of everybody else before yourself. The Squire says there's no sense in it."

"No sense in what, Master Johnny?"

"Why, in supplying those ill-doing Standishes with your substance. Herbs, and honey, and medicine—they are always getting something or other out of you."

"But they generally *need* it, sir."

"Well, they don't deserve it, you know. The Squire went into a temper to-day, saying the vagabonds ought to be left to starve if they did not choose to work, instead of being helped by the public."

Our hen-roosts had been robbed, and it was pretty certain that one or other of the Standish brothers was the thief. Perhaps all three had a hand in it. Chancing to pass Abel Crew's garden, where he was at work, I turned in to tell him of the raid; and stayed, talking. It was pleasant to sit on the bench outside the cottage window, and watch him tend his roots and flowers. The air was redolent of perfume; the bees were humming as they sailed in the summer sunshine from herb to herb, flower to flower; the dark blue sky was unclouded.

"Just look at those queer-looking people, Abel! They must be gipsies."

Abel let his hands rest on his rake, and lifted his eyes to the common. Crossing it, came two women, one elderly, one very young—a girl, in fact. Their red cloaks shone in the sun; very coarse and sun-burnt straw hats were tied down with red kerchiefs. That they belonged to the gipsy fraternity was apparent at the first glance. Pale olive complexions, the elder one's almost yellow, were lighted up with black eyes of wonderful brilliancy. The young girl was strikingly beautiful; her features clearly cut and delicate, as though carved from marble, her smooth and abundant hair of a purple black. The other's hair was purple black also, and had not a grey thread in it.

"They must be coming to tell our fortunes, Abel," I said jestingly. For the two women seemed to be making direct for the gate.

No answer from Abel, and I turned to look at him. He was gazing at the coming figures with the most intense gaze, a curious expression of inquiring doubt on his face. The rake fell from his hand.

"My search is ended," spoke the woman, halting at the gate, her glittering black eyes scanning him intently. "You are Abel Carew."

"Is it Ketira?" he asked, the words dropping from him in slow hesitation, as he took a step forward.

"Am I so much changed that you need doubt it for a moment?"

she returned : and her tone and accent fell soft and liquid ; her diction was of the purest, with just the slightest foreign ring in it. "Forty years have rolled on since you and I met, Abel Carew ; but I come of a race whose faces do not change. As we are in youth, so we are in age—save for the inevitable traces left by time."

"And this ?" questioned Abel, as he looked at the girl and drew back his gate.

"She is Ketira also ; my youngest and dearest. The youngest of sixteen children, Abel Carew ; and every one of them, save herself, lying under the sod."

"What—dead ?" he exclaimed. "Sixteen !"

"Fifteen are dead, and are resting in peace in different lands : ten of them died in infancy ere I had well taken my first look at their little faces. She is the sixteenth. See you the likeness ?" added the gipsy, pointing to the girl's face ; as she stood, modest and silent, a conscious colour tingeing her olive cheeks, and glancing up now and again through her long black eyelashes at Abel Carew.

"Likeness to you, Ketira ?"

"Not to me : though there exists enough of it between us to betray that we are mother and daughter. To him—her father."

And, while Abel was looking at the girl, I looked. And in that moment it struck me that her face bore a remarkable likeness to his own. The features were of the same high-bred cast, pure and refined ; you might have said they were made in the same mould.

"I see ; yes," said Abel.

"He has been gone, too, this many a year ; as you, perhaps, may know, Abel ; and is with the rest, waiting for us in the spirit-land. Kettie does not remember him, it is so long ago. There are only she and I left to go now. Kettie ——"

She suddenly changed her language to one I did not understand. Neither, as was easy to be seen, did Abel Carew. Whether it was Hebrew, or Egyptian, or any other rare tongue, I knew not ; but I had never in my life heard its sounds before.

"I am telling Kettie that in you she may see what her father was—for the likeness in your face and his, allowing for the difference of age, is great."

"Does Kettie not speak English ?" inquired Abel.

"Oh, yes, I speak it," answered the girl, slightly smiling, and her tones were soft and perfect as those of her mother.

"And where have you been since his death, Ketira ? Stationary in Ai——"

He dropped his voice to a whisper at the last word, and I did not catch it. I suppose he did not intend me to.

"Not stationary for long anywhere," she answered, passing into the cottage with a majestic step. I lifted my hat to the women—who,

for all their gipsy dress and origin, seemed to command consideration—and made off.

The arrival of these curious people caused some commotion at Church Dykely. It was so rare we had any event to enliven us. They took up their abode in a lonely cottage no better than a hut (one room up and one down) that stood within that lively place, the wilderness on the outskirts of Chanasse Grange; and there they stayed. How they got a living nobody knew: some thought the gipsy must have an income, others that Abel helped them.

"She was very handsome in her youth," he said to me one day, as if he wished to give some explanation of the arrival I had chanced to witness. "Handsome and finer by far than her daughter is; and one who was very near of kin to me married her: *would* marry her. She was a born gipsy, of what is called a high-caste tribe."

That was all he said. For Abel's sake, who was so respected, Church Dykely felt inclined to give respect to the women. But, when it was discovered that Ketira would tell the fortune of anyone who cared to go surreptitiously to her lonely hut, the respect cooled down. "Ketira the gipsy," she was universally called: nobody knew her by any other name. The fortune-telling came to the ears of Abel, arousing his indignation. He went to Ketira in distress, begging of her to cease such practices—but she waved him majestically out of the hut, and bade him mind his own business. Occasionally the mother and daughter shut up their dwelling and disappeared for weeks together. It was assumed they went to attend fairs and races, encamping out with the gipsy fraternity. Kettie at all times and seasons was modest and good; never was an unmaidenly look seen from her, or a bold word heard. In appearance and manner and diction she might have been a born lady, and a high-bred one. Graceful and innocent was Kettie; but heedless and giddy, as girls are apt to be.

"Look there, Johnny!"

We were at Worcester races, walking about on the course. I turned at Tod's words, and saw Ketira the gipsy, her red cloak gleaming in the sun, just as it had gleamed that day, a year before, on Dykely Common. For the past month she had been away, and her cottage shut up.

She stood at the open door of a carriage, reading the hand of the lady inside it. A notable object was Ketira on the course, with her quaint attire, her majestic figure, her fine olive-dark features, and the fire of her brilliant eyes. What good or ill luck she was promising, I know not; but I saw the lady turn pale and snatch her hand away. "You cannot *know* what you tell me," she cried in a haughty tone, sharp enough and loud enough to be heard.

"Wait and see," rejoined Ketira, turning away.

"So you have come here to see the fun, Ketira," I said to her, as she was brushing by me. During the past year I had seen more of her than many people had, and we had grown familiar; for she, as she once expressed it, "took" to me.

"The fun and the business; the pleasure and the wickedness," she answered, with a sweep of the hand round the course. "There's plenty of it abroad."

"Is Kettie not here?" I asked: and the question made her eyes glare. Though, why, I was at a loss to know, seeing that a race-ground is the legitimate resort of gipsies.

"Kettie! Do you suppose I bring Kettie to *these* scenes—to be gazed at by this ribald mass?"

"Well, it is a rabble, and a good one," I answered, looking at the crowd.

"Nay, boy," said she, following my glance, "it's not the rabble Kettie need fear, as you count rabble; it's their *bettors*"—swaying her arms towards the carriages, and the dandies, their owners or guests; some of whom were balancing themselves on the steps to talk to the pretty girls within, and some were strolling about the enclosed paddock, forbidden ground but to the "upper few." "Ketira is too fair to be shown to *them*."

"They would not eat her, Ketira."

"No, they would not eat her," she replied in a dreamy tone, as her thoughts were elsewhere.

"And I don't see any other harm they could do her, guarded by you."

"Boy," she said, dropping her voice to an impressive whisper, and lightly touching my arm with her yellow hand, "I have read Kettie's fate in the stars, and I see that there is some great and grievous peril approaching her. It *may* be averted; there's just a chance that it may: meanwhile I am encompassing her about with care, guarding her as the apple of my eye."

"And if it should not be averted?" I asked in the moment's impulse, carried away by the woman's impressive earnestness.

"Then woe be to those who bring the evil upon her!"

"And of what nature is the evil?"

"I know not," she replied, her eyes taking again their dreamy, far-off look. "Woe is me!—for I know it not."

"How do you do, Ludlow? Not here alone, are you?"

A good-looking young fellow, Hyde Stockhausen, had reined in his horse to ask the question: giving at the same time a keen glance to the gipsy woman and then a half smile at me, as if he suspected I was having my fortune told.

"The rest are on the course somewhere. The Squire is driving old Jacobson about."

As Hyde nodded and rode on, I chanced to see Ketira's face. It was stretched out after him with the most eager gaze on it, a defiant look in her black eyes. I thought Stockhausen must have offended her.

"Do you know him?" I asked involuntarily.

"I never saw him before; but I don't like him," she answered, showing her white and gleaming teeth. "Who is he?"

"His name is Stockhausen."

"I don't like him," she repeated in a muttering tone. "He is an enemy. I don't like his look."

Considering that he was a well-looking man, with a pleasant face and gay blue eyes, a face that no reasonable spirit could take umbrage at, I wondered to hear her say this.

"You must have a peculiar taste in looks, Ket'ra, to dislike his."

"You don't understand," she said abruptly: and, turning away, disappeared in the throng.

Only once more did I catch sight of Ketira that day. It was at the lower end of Pitchcroft, near the show. She was standing in front of a booth, staring at a group of horsemen who seemed to have met and halted there, one of whom was young Stockhausen. Again the notion crossed me that he must in some way have affronted her. It was on him her eyes were fixed: and in them lay the same curious, defiant expression of antagonism, mingled with fear.

Hyde Stockhausen was the step-son of old Massock of South Crabb. The Stockhausens had a name in Worcestershire for dying off, as I have told the reader before. Hyde's father had proved no exception. After his death the widow married Massock the brickmaker, putting up with the man's vulgarity for the sake of his riches. It took people by surprise: for she had been a lady always, as Miss Hyde and as Mrs. Stockhausen: one might have thought she would rather have put up with a clown from Pershore fair than with Massock the illiterate. Hyde Stockhausen was well educated: his uncle, Tom Hyde the parson, had taken care of that. At twenty-one he came into some money, and at once began to do his best to spend it. He was to have been a parson, but could not get through at Oxford, and gave up trying for it. His uncle quarrelled with him then: he knew Hyde had not *tried* to pass, and that he openly said nobody should make a parson of *him*. After the quarrel, Hyde went off to see what the Continent was like. He stayed so long that the world at home thought he was lost. For the past ten or eleven months he had been back at his mother's at South Crabb, knocking about; as Massock phrased it to the Squire one day. Hyde said he was "looking out" for something to do: but he was quite easy as to the future, feeling sure his old uncle would leave him well off. Parson Hyde had never married; and had plenty of money to bequeath to somebody. As to Hyde's own money, that had nearly come to an end.

Naturally old Massock (an ill-conditioned kind of man) grew impatient over this state of things, reproaching Hyde with his idle habits, which were a bad example for his own sons. And only just before this very day that we were on Worcester racecourse, rumours reached Church Dykely that Stockhausen was coming over to settle there and superintend certain fields of brick-making, which Massock had recently purchased and commenced working. As if Massock could not have kept himself and his bricks at South Crabb! But it was hardly likely that Hyde, really a gentleman, would take to brick-making.

We did not know much of him. His connection with Massock had kept people aloof. Many who would have been glad enough to make friends with Hyde would not do it as long as he had his home at Massock's. His mother's strange and fatal marriage with the man (fatal as regarded her place in society) told upon Hyde, and there's no doubt he must have felt the smart.

The rumour proved to be correct. Hyde Stockhausen took up his abode at Church Dykely, as overseer, or clerk, or manager—whatever might be the right term for it—of the men employed in his step-father's brick operations. The pretty little house, called Virginia Cottage, owned by Henry Rimmer, which had the Virginia creeper trailing up its red walls, and flowers clustering in its productive garden, was furnished for him; and Hyde installed himself in it as thoroughly and completely as though he had entered on brick-making for life. Some people laughed. "But it's only while I am turning myself round," he said, one day, to the Squire.

Hyde soon got acquainted with Church Dykely, and would drop into people's houses of an evening, laughing over his occupation, and saying he should be able to make bricks himself in time. His chief work seemed to be in standing about the brick-yard watching the men, and in writing and book-keeping at home. Old Massock made his appearance once a month, when accounts and such-like items were gone over between them.

When it was that Hyde first got on speaking terms with Kettie, or where, or how, I cannot tell. So far as I know, nobody could tell. It was late in the autumn when Ketira and her daughter came back to their hut; and by the following early spring some of us had grown accustomed to seeing Hyde and Kettie together in an evening, snatching a short whisper or a five minutes' walk. In March, I think it was, she and Ketira went away again, and returned in May.

The twenty-ninth of May was at that time kept as a holiday in Worcestershire, though it has dropped out of use as such in late years. In Worcester itself there was a grand procession, which country people went in to see, and a special service in the cathedral. We had service also at Church Dykely, and the villagers adorned their front-doors



with immense oak boughs, sprays of which we young ones wore in our jackets, the oak-balls and leaves gilded. I remember one year that the big bough (almost a tree) which Henry Rimmer had hoisted over his sign, the "Silver Bear," came to grief. Whether Rimmer had not secured it as firmly as usual, or that the cords were rotten, down came the huge bough with a crash on old Mr. Stirling's head, who chanced to be coming out of the inn. He went on at Rimmer finely, vowing his neck was broken, and that Rimmer ought to be hung up there himself.

On this twenty-ninth of May I met Kettie. It was on the common, near Abel Carew's. Kettie had caught up the fashion of the place, and wore a little spray of oak peeping out from between the folds of her red cloak. And I may as well say that neither she nor her mother ever went out without the cloak. In cold and heat, in rain and sunshine, the red cloak was worn out of doors.

"Are you making holiday to-day, Kettie?"

"Not more than usual; all days are the same to us," she answered, in her sweet, soft voice, and with the slightly foreign accent that attended the speech of both. But Kettie had it more strongly than her mother.

"You have not gilded your oak-ball."

Kettie glanced down at the one ball, nestling amid its green leaves. "I had no gilding to put on it, Mr. Johnny."

"No! I have some in my pocket. Let me gild it for you."

Her teeth shone like pearls as she smiled and held out the spray. How beautiful she was! with those delicate features and the large dark eyes!—eyes that were softer than Ketira's. Taking the little paper book from my pocket, and some of the gilt leaf from between its tissue leaves, I wetted the oak-ball and gilded it. Kettie watched intently.

"Where did you get it all from?" she asked, meaning the gilt leaf.

"I bought it at Hewitt's. Don't you know the shop? A stationer's; next door to Pettipher the druggist's. Hewitt does no end of a trade in these leaves on the twenty-ninth of May."

"Did you buy it to gild oak-balls for yourself, sir?"

"For the young ones at home: Hugh and Lena. There it is, Kettie."

Had it been a ball of solid gold that I put into her hand, instead of a gilded oak-ball, Kettie could not have shown more intense delight. Her cheeks flushed; the wonderful brilliancy that joy brought to her eyes caused my own eyes to turn away. For her eighteen years she was childish in some things; very much so, considering the experience that her wandering life must (as one would suppose) have brought her. In replacing the spray within her cloak, Kettie dropped

something out of her hand—apparently a small box folded in paper. I picked it up.

"Is it a fairing, Kettie? But this is not fair time."

"It is—I forget the name," she replied, looking at me and hesitating. "My mother is ill; the pains are in her shoulder again; and my Uncle Abel has given me this to rub upon it, the same that did her good before. I cannot just call the name to mind in the English tongue."

"Say it in your own."

She spoke a very outlandish word, laughed, and turned red again. Certainly there never lived a more modest girl than Kettie.

"Is it liniment?—ointment?"

"Yes, it is that, the last," she said: "Abel calls it so. I thank you for what you have done for me, sir. Good day."

To show so much gratitude for that foolish bit of gilt leaf on her oak-ball! It illumined every line of her face. I liked Kettie: liked her for her innocent simplicity. Had she not been a gipsy, many a gentleman might have been proud to make her his wife.

Close upon that, it was known that Ketira was laid up with rheumatism. The weather came in hot, and the days went on: and Kettie and Hyde were now and then seen together.

One evening, on leaving Mrs. Scott's, where we had been to arrange with Sam to go fishing with us on the morrow, Tod said he would invite Hyde Stockhausen to be of the party; so we took Virginia Cottage on our road home, and asked for Hyde.

"Not at home!" retorted Tod, resenting the old woman's answer, as though it had been a personal affront. "Where is he?"

"Master Hyde has only just stepped out, sir; twenty minutes ago, or so," said she, pleadingly excusing the fact. Which was but natural: she had been Hyde's nurse when he was a child; and had now come here to do for him. "I daresay, sir, he be only walking about a bit, to get the fresh air."

Tod whistled some bars of a tune thoughtfully. He did not like to be crossed.

"Well, look here, Mrs. Preen," said he. "Some of us are going to fish in the long pond on Mr. Jacobson's grounds to-morrow: tell Mr. Hyde that if he would like to join us, I shall be happy to see him. Breakfast, half past eight o'clock; sharp."

In turning out beyond the garden, I could not help noticing how pretty and romantic was the scene. A good many trees grew about that part, thick enough almost for a wood in places; and the light and shade, cast by the moon on the grass amidst them, had quite a weird appearance. It was a bright night; the moon high in the sky.

"Is that Hyde?" cried Tod.

Halting for a moment in doubt, he peered out over the field to the

distance. Some one was leisurely pacing under the opposite trees. *Two* people, I thought : but they were completely in the shade.

"I think it is Hyde, Tod. Somebody is with him."

"Just wait another instant, lad, and they'll be in that patch of moonlight by the turning."

But they did not go into that patch of moonlight. Just before they reached it (and the two figures were plain enough now) they turned back again and took the narrow inlet that led to Oxlip Dell. Whoever it was with Hyde had a hooded cloak on. Was it a red one? Tod laughed.

"Oh, by George, here's fun ! He has got Kettie out for a moonlight stroll. Let's go and ask them how they enjoy it."

"Hyde might not like us to."

"There you are again, Johnny, with your queer scruples ! Stuff and nonsense ! Stockhausen can't have anything to say to Kettie that all the world may not hear. I want to tell him about to-morrow."

Tod made off across the grass for the inlet, I after him. Yes, there they were, promenading Oxlip Dell in the flickering light, now in the shade, now in the brightest of the moonbeams ; Hyde's arm hugging her red cloak.

Tod gave a grunt of displeasure. "Stockhausen must be doing it for pastime," he said ; "but he ought not to be so thoughtless. Ketira the gipsy would give the girl a shaking if she knew : she——"

The words came to an abrupt ending. There stood Ketira herself.

She was at the extreme end of the inlet amid the trees, holding on by the trunk of one, round which her head was cautiously pushed to view the promenaders. Comparatively speaking, it was dark just here ; but I could see the strangely-wild look in the gipsy's eyes : the woe-begone expression of her remarkable face.

"It is coming," she said, apparently in answer to Tod's remarks, which she could not have failed to hear. "It is coming quickly."

"What is coming?" I asked.

"The fate in store for her. And it's worse than death."

"If you don't like her to walk out by moonlight, why not keep her in?—not that there can be any harm in it," interposed Tod. "If you don't approve of her being friendly with Hyde Stockhausen," he went on after a pause, for Ketira made no answer, "why don't you put a stop to it?"

"Because she has her mother's spirit and her mother's *will*," cried Ketira. "And she likes to have her own way : and I fear, woe's me ! that if I forced her to mine, things might become worse than they are even now : that she might take some fatal step."

"I am going home," said Tod at this juncture, perhaps fancying the matter was getting complicated : and, of all things, he hated compli-

cations. "Good night, old lady. We heard you were in bed with rheumatism."

He set off back, up the narrow inlet. I said I'd catch him up: and stayed behind for a last word with Ketira.

"What did you mean by a fatal step?"

"That she might leave me and seek the protection of the Tribe. We have had words about this. Kettie says little, but I see the signs of determination in her silent face. 'I will not have you meet or speak to that man,' I said to her this morning—for she was out with him last evening also. She made me no reply: but—you see—how she has obeyed! Her heart's life has been awakened, and by *him*. There's only one object to whom she clings now in all the whole earth; and that is to him. I am nothing."

"He will not bring any great harm upon her: you need not fear that of Hyde Stockhausen."

"Did I say he would?" she answered fiercely, her black eyes glaring and gleaming. "But he will bring *sorrow* on her and rend her heart-strings. A man's fancies are light as the summer wind, fickle as the ocean waves: but when a woman loves it is for life; sometimes for death."

Hyde and Kettie had disappeared at the upper end of the dell, taking the way that in a minute or two would bring them out in the open fields. Ketira turned back along the narrow path, and I with her.

"I knew he would bring some ill upon me, that first moment when I saw him on Worcester race-ground," resumed Ketira in a low tone of pain. "Instinct warned me that he was an enemy. And what ill can be like that of stealing my young child's heart! Once a girl's heart is taken—and taken but to be toyed with, to be flung back at will—her day-dreams in this life are over."

Emerging into the open ground, the first thing we saw was the pair of lovers about to part. They were standing face to face: Hyde held both her hands while speaking his last words, and then bent suddenly down, as if to whisper them. Ketira gave a sharp cry at that, perhaps she fancied he was stealing a kiss, and lifted her right hand menacingly. The girl ran swiftly in the direction of her home—which was not far off—and Hyde strode, not much less quickly, towards his. Ketira stood as still as a stone image, watching him till he disappeared within his gate.

"There's no harm in it," I persuasively said, sorry to see her so full of trouble. But she was as one who heard not.

"No harm at all, Ketira. I dare answer for it that a score of lads and lasses are out. Why should we not walk in the moonlight as well as the sunlight? For my part, I should call it a shame to stay indoors on this glorious night."

"An enemy, an enemy! A grand gentleman, who will leave her to pine her heart away! What kind of man is he, that Hyde Stockhausen?" she continued, turning to me fiercely.

"Kind of man? A pleasant one. I have not heard any ill of him?"

"Rich?"

"No. Perhaps he will be rich sometime. He makes bricks, you know, now. That is, he superintends the men."

"Yes, I know," she answered: and I don't suppose there was much connected with Hyde she did not know. Looking this way, looking that, she at length began to walk, slowly and painfully, towards Hyde's gate. The thought had crossed me—why did she not take Kettie away on one of their long expeditions, if she dreaded him so much. But the rheumatism lay upon her still too heavily.

Flinging open the gate, she went across the garden, not making for the proper entrance, but for a lighted room, whose French-window stood open to the ground. Hyde was there, just sitting down to supper.

"Come in with me," she said, turning her head round to beckon me on.

But I did not choose to go in. It was no affair of mine that I should beard Hyde in his den. Very astonished indeed must he have been, when she glided in at the window, and stood before him. I saw him rise from his chair; I saw the astounded look of old Deborah Preen when she came in with his supper ale in a jug.

What they said to one another, I know not. I did not wish to listen: though it was only natural I should stay to see the play out. Just as natural as it was for Preen to come stealing round through the kidney beans to the front garden, an anxious look on her face.

"What does that old gipsy woman want with the young master, Mr. Ludlow? Is he having his fortune told?"

"I shouldn't wonder. Wish some good genius would tell mine!"

The interview seemed to have been short and sharp. Ketira was coming out again. Hyde followed her to the window. Both were talking at once, and the tail of the dispute reached our ears.

"I repeat to you that you are totally mistaken," Hyde was saying. "I have no 'designs,' as you put it, on your daughter, good or bad; no design whatever. She is perfectly free to go her own way, for me. My good woman, you have no cause to adjure me in that solemn manner. Sacred? 'Under heaven's protection?' Well, so she may be. I hope she is. Why should I wish to hinder it? I don't wish to. I don't intend to. You need not glare so."

Ketira, outside the window now, turned and faced him, her great eyes fixed on him, her hand raised in menace.

"Do not forget that I have warned you, Hyde Stockhausen. By the

Great Power that regulates all things, human and divine, I affirm that I speak the truth. If harm in any shape or of any kind comes to my child, my dear one, my only one, through you, it will cost you more than you would now care to have foretold."

"Bless my heart!" faintly ejaculated old Preen. And she drew away, and backed for shelter into the bean rows.

Ketira brushed against me as she passed, taking no notice whatever; left the garden, and limped away. Hyde saw me swinging through the gate.

"Are you there, Johnny?" he said, coming forward. "Did you hear that old gipsy woman?" And in a few words I told him all about it.

"Such a fuss for nothing!" he exclaimed. "I'm sure I wish no ill to the girl. Kettie's very nice; bright as the day; and I thought no more harm of strolling a bit with her in the moonlight than I should think it if she were my sister."

"But she is not your sister, you see, Hyde. And old Ketira does not like it."

"I'll take precious good care to keep Kettie at arm's length for the future; make you very sure of that," he said, in a short, fractious tone. "I don't care to be blamed for nothing. Tell Todhetley I can't spare the time to go fishing to-morrow—wish I could. Good night."

A fine commotion. Church Dykely up in arms. Kettie had disappeared.

About a fortnight had gone on since the above night, during which period Ketira's rheumatism took so obstinate a turn that she had the felicity of keeping her bed. And one morning, upon Duffham's chancing to pay his visit to her before breakfast, for he was passing the hut on his way home from an early patient, he found the gipsy up and dressed, and just as wild as a lioness rampant. Kettie had gone away in the night.

"Where's she gone to?" naturally asked Duffham, leaning on his cane, and watching the poor woman; who was whirling about like one demented, her rheumatism forgotten.

"Ah, where's she gone to?—where?" raved old Ketira. "When I lay down last night, leaving her to put the plates away and to follow me up when she had done it, I dropped asleep at once. All night long I never woke; the pain was easier, all but gone, and I had been wellnigh worn out with it. 'Why, what's the time, Kettie?' I said to her in our own tongue, when I opened my eyes and saw the sun was high. She did not answer, and I supposed she had gone down to get the breakfast. I called, and called; in vain. I began to put my clothes on; and then I found that she had not lain down that night; and—woe's me! she's gone."

Duffham could not make anything of it; it was less in his line than



rheumatism and broken legs. Being sharp-set for his breakfast, he came away, telling Ketira he would see her again by-and-by.

And, shortly afterwards, he chanced to meet her. Coming out on his rounds of visits, he encountered Ketira near Virginia Cottage. She had been making a call on Hyde Stockhausen.

"He baffles me," she said to the doctor: and Duffham thought if ever a woman's face had the expression "baffled" plainly written on it, Ketira's had then. "I don't know what to make of him. His speech is fair: but—there's the instinct lying in my heart."

"Why, you don't suppose, do you, that Mr. Stockhausen has stolen the child?" questioned Duffham, after a good pause of thought.

"And by whom do *you* suppose the child has been stolen, if not by him?" retorted the gipsy.

"Nay," said Duffham, "I should say she has not been stolen at all. It is difficult to steal girls of her age, remember. Last night was fine; the stars were bright as silver: perhaps, tempted by it, she went out a roaming, and you will see her back in the course of the day."

"I suspect him," repeated Ketira, her great black eyes flashing their anger on Hyde's cottage. "He acts cleverly; but, I suspect him."

Drawing her scarlet cloak higher on her shoulders, she bent her steps towards Oxlip Dell. Duffham was turning on his way, when old Abel Crew came up. We called him "Crew," you know, at Church Dykely.

"Are you looking for Kettie?" questioned Duffham.

"I don't know where to look for her," was Abel's answer. "This morning I was out before sunrise searching for rare herbs: the round I took was an unusually large one, but I did not see anything of the child. Ketira suspects that Mr. Stockhausen must know where she is."

"And do you suspect he does?"

"It is a question that I cannot answer, even to my own mind," replied Abel. "That they were sometimes seen talking and walking together, is certain; and, so far, he may be open to suspicion. But, sir, I know nothing else against him, and I cannot think he would wish to hurt her. I am on my way to ask him."

Interested by this time in the drama, Duffham followed Abel to Virginia Cottage. Hyde Stockhausen was in the little den that he made his counting-house, adding up columns of figures in a ledger, and stared considerably upon being thus pounced upon.

"I wonder what next!" he burst forth, turning crusty before Abel had got out half a sentence. "That confounded old gipsy has just been here with her abuse; and now you have come! She has accused me of I know not what all."

"Of spiriting away her daughter," put in Duffham; who was standing back against the shelves.

"But I have not done it," spluttered Hyde, talking too fast for convenience in his passion. "If I had spirited her away, as you call it, where she would be. Where could I spirit her to?—up into the air, or below the ground?"

"That's just the question—where is she?" rejoined Duffham, gently swaying his big cane.

"How should I know where she is?" retorted Hyde. "If I had 'spirited' her away—I must say I like that word!—here she'd be. Do you suppose I have got her in my house?—or down at the brick-kilns?"

Abel, since his first checked sentence, had been standing quietly and thoughtfully, giving his whole attention to Hyde, as if wanting to see what he was made of. For the second time he essayed to speak.

"You see, sir, we do not know that she is not here. We have your word for it; but ——"

"Then you had better look," interrupted Hyde, adding something about "insolence" under his breath. "Search the house. You are welcome to. Mr. Duffham can show you about it; he knows all its turnings and windings."

What could have been in old Abel's thoughts did not appear on the surface; but he left the room with just a word of respectful apology for accepting the offer. Hyde, who had made it at random in his passion, never supposing it would be caught at, threw back his head disdainfully, and sent a contemptuous word after him. But when Duffham moved off in the same direction, he was utterly surprised.

"Are *you* going to search?"

"I thought you meant me to be his pilot," said Duffham, as cool as you please. "There's not much to be seen, I expect, but the chairs and tables."

Any way, Kettie was not to be seen. The house was but a small one, with no surreptitious closets or cupboards, or other hiding-places. All the rooms and passages stood open to the morning sun, and never a suspicious thing was in them.

Hyde had settled to his accounts again when they got back. He did not condescend to turn his head or notice the offenders any way. Abel waited a moment, and then spoke.

"It may seem to you that I have done a discourteous thing in availing myself of your offer, Mr. Stockhausen; if so, I crave your pardon for it. Sir, you cannot imagine how seriously this disappearance of the child is affecting her mother. Let it plead my excuse."

"It cannot excuse your suspicion of me," returned Hyde, pausing for a moment in his adding up.

"In all the ends of this wide earth there lies not elsewhere a shadow of clue to any motive for her departure. At least, none that we can gather. The only ground for thinking of you, sir, is that you and she

have been friendly. For all our sakes, Mr. Stockhausen, I trust that she will be found, and the mystery cleared up."

"Don't you think you had better have the brick-kilns visited—as well as my house?" sarcastically asked Hyde. But Abel, making no rejoinder, save a civil good morning, departed.

"And now I'll go," said Duffham.

"The sooner the better," retorted Hyde, taking a penful of ink and splashing some of it on the floor.

"There's no cause for you to put yourself out, young man."

"I think there is cause," flashed Hyde. "When you can come to my house with such an accusation as this!—and insolently search it!"

"The searching was the result of your own proposal. As to an accusation, none has been made in my hearing. Kettie has mysteriously disappeared, and it is only natural her people should wish to know where she is, and to look for her. You take up the matter in a wrong light, Mr. Hyde."

"I don't know anything of Kettie"—in an injured tone; "I don't want to. It's rather hard to have her vagaries put upon my back."

"Well, you have only to tell them you don't in an honest manner; I daresay they'll believe you. Abel Carew is one of the most reasonable men I ever knew; sensible, too. Try and find the child yourself; help them to do it, if you can see a clue; make common cause with them."

"You would not like to be told that you had 'spirited' somebody away, more than I like it," grumbled Hyde; who, thoroughly put out, was hard to come round. "I'm sure you are as likely to turn kidnapper as I am. It must be a good two weeks since anybody saw me speak to the girl."

"I shall have my patients thinking I am kidnapped if I don't get off to them," cried Duffham. "Mrs. Godfrey's ill, and she is the very essence of impatience. Good day."

Thoroughly at home in the house, Duffham made no ceremony of departing by the back door, it being more convenient for the road he was going. Deborah Preen was washing endive at the pump in the yard. She turned round to address Duffham as he was passing.

"Has the master spoke to you about his throat, sir?"

"No," said Duffham, halting. "What is amiss with his throat?"

"He has been given to sore throats all his life, Dr. Duffham. Many's the time I have had him laid up with them when he was a child. Yesterday he was quite bad with one, sir; and so he is this morning."

"Perhaps that's why he's cross," remarked Duffham.

"Cross! and enough to make him cross!" returned she, taking up the implication warmly. "I ask your pard'n, sir, for speaking so to you; but I'd like to know what gentleman could help being cross when

that yellow gipsy comes to attack him with her slanderous tongue, and say to him, Have you come across to my hut in the night and stole my daughter out of it !”

“ You think your master did not go across and commit the theft ? ”

“ I know he did not,” was Preen’s indignant answer. “ He never stirred out of his own home, sir, all last night ; he was nursing his throat indoors. At ten o’clock he went to bed, and I took him up a posset after he was in it. Well, sir, I was uneasy, for I don’t like these sore throats, and between two and three o’clock I crept into his room and found him sleeping quietly ; and I was in again this morning and woke him up with a cup o’ tea.”

“ A pretty good proof that he did not go out,” said Duffham.

“ He never was as much as out of his bed, sir. The man that sleeps indoors locked up the house last night, and opened it again this morning. Ketira the gipsy would be in gaol if she got her deservings ! ”

“ I wonder where the rest of us would be if we got ours ! ” quoth Duffham. “ I suppose I had better go back and take a look at this throat ! ”

To see the miserable distress of Ketira that day, and the despair upon her face as she dodged about between Virginia Cottage and the brick-fields, was like a gloomy picture.

“ Do you remember telling me once that you feared Kettie might run away to the tribe ? ” I asked, meeting her on one of these wanderings in the afternoon. “ Perhaps that is where she is gone ? ”

The suggestion seemed to offend her mortally. “ Boy, I know better,” she said, facing round upon me fiercely. “ With the tribe she would be safe, and I at rest. The stars never deceive me.”

And, when the sun went down that night and the stars came out, the environs of Virginia Cottage were still haunted by Ketira the gipsy.

I cannot get the rest in.

JOHNNY LUDLOW.



## TWICE.

Last time but one I saw my darling's face,  
The tears were in her eyes, and when she tried  
To hide them with a new and touching grace,  
Smiling she sighed.

"Good-bye, my love," she said ; "Good-bye for aye."  
Words that fell strangely on my startled ear ;  
But still, with soft reproach, I answered "Nay,  
What dost thou fear ?

"To-morrow I return ; till then farewell."  
She raised to mine her face so grave and fair  
Amid her tears : I kissed them ere they fell,  
And left her there.

And never doubt nor warning bade me stay,  
And never came a fear my heart to chill ;  
Gaily, with fond adieux, I rode away,  
Nor thought of ill.

But often as I turned me to the place,  
Shading sad eyes from light of setting sun  
She stood ; and thus I saw my darling's face—  
Last time but one.

But one. Ah ! sweet, my love, that other time  
I strove to look thro' bitter, blinding tears  
Upon thy beauty, withered in the prime  
Of early years.

Pale moonbeams falling on a paler brow,  
And tranquil closed eyes that seemed to sleep  
The sounder for my agony,—ah ! now  
'Twas mine to weep.

So standing by her side, and yet alone,  
I pressed warm, trembling lips to hers of clay,  
And murmured to my darling dead and gone,  
"Good-bye for aye."

S. E. G.

## THE LAKES OF SAVOIE.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "A NIGHT IN A MONASTERY."

"**L'**APPETIT vient en mangeant," is a homely but not untrue proverb under many of the conditions of life. It is especially true of the lover of Nature, whose hunger and thirst for her beauties increase as he grows more familiar with them. "The eye is never satisfied with seeing."

We return to our early recollections of mountains and valleys, fair streams and smiling pastures; and, like a lover gazing into the eyes of his mistress, ever see in them fresh beauties to enchant.

Few, comparatively speaking, who have the opportunity of visiting the lakes of Savoie do so. They know not how much they lose. There are few spots to be found of greater beauty; beauties of every description, and appealing both to the pedestrian and to him who travels more rapidly. Beauties of lake, river, mountain, and plain: scenes alternately sylvan, wooded, smiling, and barren; ancient towns and rustic villages: and again the experiences of desert solitudes. Walks by sunshine, or long excursions by the silver moonlight, tempting you away from the haunts of man into mountainous bypaths, or solitary rows upon a lake, where the spirit may uninterruptedly indulge in its dreams; dreams of romance, imagination, love, ambition, according to its individual temperament: where it may hold communion with itself in a manner which seems to bring it into closer contact with its Divine Creator than any other earthly influence whatsoever: an influence realized only by those in whom the love of Nature is paramount and all powerful.

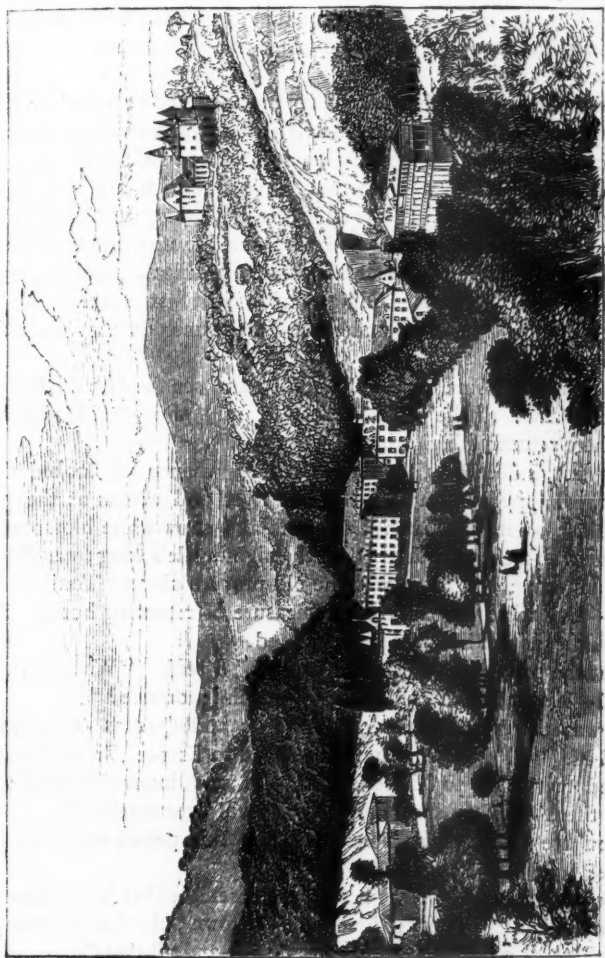
The reason why few compared with the great mass of travellers visit the lakes of Savoie, or penetrate into its interior, is obvious. It is on the high road to Italy; that land of poetry and painting; of ancient heroes and sparkling music and blue skies: the goal towards which so many hurry, regardless of the flowers which grow by the wayside. These they cannot wait to cull; and much of the most delicate and lasting perfume they would enjoy is lost to them.

Savoie is on the high road to Italy; that is to say, you have to turn aside from the high road to reach it; and it is this turning aside that is so fatal. It is in the immediate vicinity of Switzerland, and of Italy, of places known to fame and frequented by the world of wealth and fashion. But it demands a break in the long direct journey, and some days devoted to itself; an effort few dream of attempting. So the thousands pass on, and Savoie is left to the tens for appreciation: all the more pure and fresh that it is less seen and less spoiled than its



neighbours. Like a violet between a water lily and a full-blown rose—how many would choose the sweet-scented, modest blossom?

We, too, were athirst for “fresh fields and pastures new;” and, these fields and pastures lying amidst glorious snow-capped mountains



URIAGE-LES-BAINS.

whispering of eternity, and calm lakes suggestive of repose, it was a thirst to be gratified if possible. We had been to Allevard, and the wonderful drive to the Monastery of St. Hugon still glowed in our imagination. We had just driven to Uriage-les-Bains: situated at an hour's distance from Grenoble; a constant ascent by the side of a

running stream, amidst the mountains : terminating in the watering-place of which we cannot forbear giving our readers a sketch. The waters of Uriage are famous as a specific for many maladies ; and in the season the place is frequented by a gay and fashionable throng ; the softer sex never appearing in less than three toilettes a day, unless they wish to be considered as something less than *bon ton* by their sister invalids, many of whose ailments may be summed up in the one word—ennui.

The season at Uriage had not yet commenced, and we found ourselves in full possession of the place ; hotels shut up, and windows barred to the light of day. We left the carriage and roamed amidst the trees and over the grass, which was emerald green, and rich and golden with cowslips and primroses. It was after this drive that, sitting in the long avenue at home, the eye feasted with the beauties around, the ear enchanted with the ceaseless strains of the nightingales, and waiting for the nevertheless welcome tidings, "*Madame est servie*," M. the Insatiable suddenly put an undertone to the melody that came from the trees.

"Why not go, some day, to Chambéry, and see the Lac du Bourget, and the Palace of the Haute-Combe?" said she. "All who have been there return with glowing descriptions."

Why not, indeed? This shady avenue ; whence we looked down upon the happy valley and the silvery river, and across at the great mountains ; where we watched the pink and snow-white blossoms fall from the fruit-trees, and listened to the nightingale's song ; was delightful in its way : but there was the old proverb about "*Toujours perdrix*"—and there was always the pleasure of returning home. Such a proposal was not likely to be negatived.

"But the palace of the Haute-Combe?" I said. "What is it, and where?—if this be not confessing too much ignorance?"

"It was the burial place of the Kings and Queens of Sardinia," replied M. "And when Savoie was ceded to France, Victor Emanuel reserved this place to himself : and, it is said, intends himself to be buried there—the last sovereign its walls will ever receive."

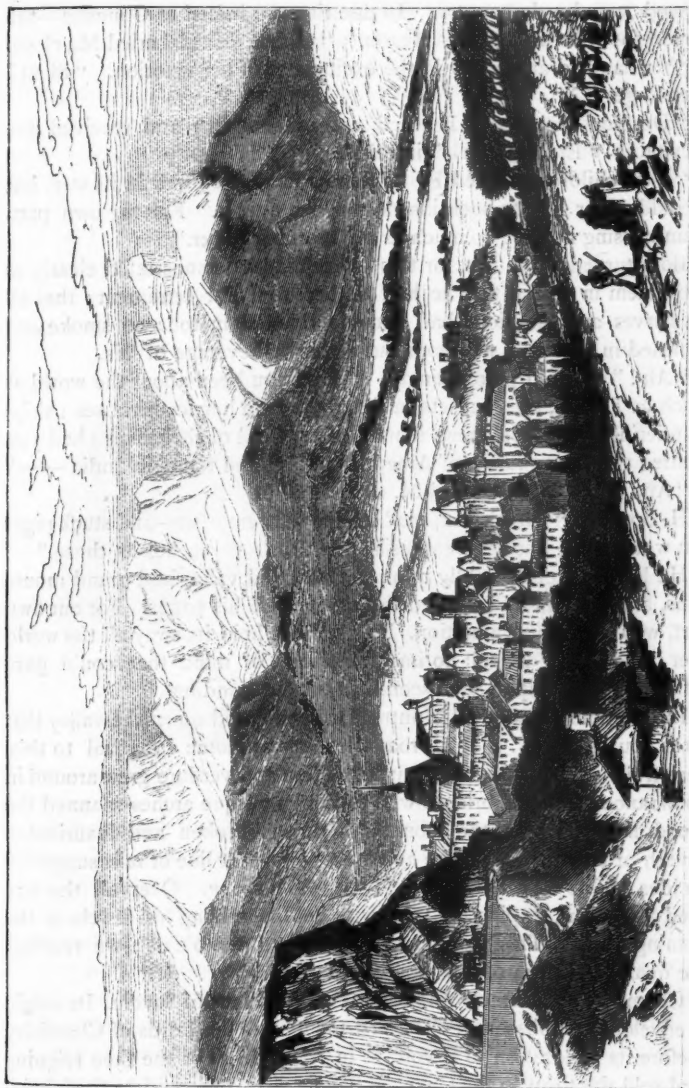
"You are pathetic, *ma sœur*. And is this palace worth so great trouble?"

"Not only the palace. It is the tout ensemble that is so charming. The journey to Chambéry ; the quaint old town ; the Lac du Bourget ; the excitement of motion ; new sensations—and all that."

This was more than enough to tempt even the unwilling ; and H., who, like a snail, is often difficult to lure from his shell, volunteered to turn our ordinary tête-à-tête into a trio.

A morning or two later, again at five o'clock, the shutters of my room swung back upon the splendid view. During the night the nightingales more unceasingly than ever had banished sleep ; and I had begun to

think—as once before on a similar occasion at Nuremberg—that it is possible to have too much of a good thing. But the chorus had heralded in a morning brilliant and unclouded, and the heart was in-



CHAMBERY IN DAYS GONE BY.

clined to forgiveness. We must have our troubles from one source or another: sometimes even out of our very pleasures.

This morning we did not walk to the train. Punctual to the  
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moment the carriage came round, and in ten minutes we once more found ourselves at Gières station. There was a three hours' journey in prospective before reaching Chambéry, but the greater part of it lay through very lovely country. In due time we halted at Goncein—the station for Allevard and St. Hugon. "O that drive!" cried M., clasping her hands dramatically in the excitement of her emotion. "Shall I ever forget it?"

"Do you wish to?" I asked unsentimentally; and received the inevitable "Et tu, Brute!" in rebuke.

"Two children!" cried H. "Scenery's all very well in its way, but I could never go into such insane raptures over it. For my own part, I am missing nothing so much as my morning paper."

Both turned upon him for this speech, and demonstrated clearly as a problem in Euclid that he had neither soul nor sentiment: that all his nerves and emotions had become clouded in tobacco smoke and drowned in cassis—a nauseous but favourite beverage of his.

"Ah!" he cried patronizingly. "Had you been about the world as much as I have; seen sunsets in the tropics and hurricanes at sea: ships foundering and ships' crews in momentary peril of their lives; had you scoured the great prairies of America, and hunted tigers in India——"

"And stuck pigs?" asked M. artlessly.

H. bowed. "Thank you, maçam, for the reminder—and stuck pigs: you would have but little enthusiasm left for such scenes as these."

He looked around coldly upon the beautiful valley and grand mountains, and once more bewailed the absence of his paper. For our own part, we doubted his assertion. Beauty must hold its sway all the world over; and it was difficult to imagine a state of mind that could gaze with indifference upon such scenes as the surrounding.

In due time we reached Montmélian, and gazed down the valley that takes you into Italy. If all roads leading to Rome are equal to this, here truly is a Paradise upon earth. Trees and verdure grew around in abundance; ancient bridges with their picturesque arches spanned the broad, flowing river; the mountain side was broken and luxuriant, a church or cottage rising here and there; while the line of rails suggested an idea of life and animation to the whole scene. Over all the sun shed his beams, tipping the trees with gold, sparkling his jewels in the running water. This passed away, and about ten o'clock we reached the quaint old town of Chambéry.

Chambéry was formerly the capital of the Duchy of Savoie. Its origin is enveloped in obscurity. The first mention of the Lords of Chambéry (before its annexation to Savoie) is in 1029. In 1232 the then reigning lord sold the town to the Count of Savoie, who, to propitiate the inhabitants, accorded them various favours and privileges. After this the history of the town underwent many vicissitudes; now passing into the hands of the French, now into that of the Spaniards, and again into that

of Savoie. Finally, by the treaty of 1860, it again became united to France. The Archbishop of Chambéry was made a cardinal, and his red hat hangs over the altar in the Cathedral ; whilst the place where his body rests has been turned into a shrine, where you may find candles burning, and relics hanging, and dévotes telling their beads, at all hours of the day.

The town at once strikes the traveller as being ancient, and curious, and well worth a visit. Not the picturesque antiquity of such a town as Nuremberg, where you do not find any building of to-day to destroy the uniformity of past centuries. Chambéry is in great part modern, but here and there its antiquity peeps out : and you feel yourself in the presence of something that has a history.

We made our way to the Hôtel de la Métropole, which had been recommended to us as the best in the town. If this be so, Chambéry



LES CHARMETTES.

cannot certainly boast of lodging its guests in luxurious quarters. The host and hostess were an immense couple, the latter bearing away the palm in point of size, though still not rivalling our hostess of the Hôtel du Commerce at Allevard. It was evident, too, in the present instance, that the lady "ruled the roast."

We were speedily informed that our intention of returning home that night must be set aside—that is, if we paid a visit to the Lac du Bourget ; and nothing less than this could be thought of. H., always practical, at once ordered breakfast ; and the landlord sent round for a carriage to convey us, whilst this was preparing, to a spot I had long wished to visit : a spot that had always borne a peculiar charm to me, as it must to all who are interested in the life and works of that unhappy man, Jean Jacques Rousseau—les Charmettes.



In a very few minutes the carriage arrived. But what a conveyance ! The fac-simile of the one the man had endeavoured to thrust upon us at Allevard. An old, lumbering cabriolet with a heavy hood to it, and a hard, loose seat that jolted with every movement of the ancient dilapidated horse, as he trotted wearily over the rough, uneven road.

"How could you think of sending for such a vehicle as this?" was asked of the landlord. Mine host, having no reply, abused the driver. The driver, excusing himself, declared he had none other at liberty. There was no time to make a change; every moment was precious; but with an understanding that something better must be provided on our return for the drive to the Lac du Bourget, we started for les Charmettes.

It was not a long drive. In half an hour we had reached our destination; but it would be difficult to imagine a prettier or more picturesque scene. The road, winding by the hill-side, took us through a wealth of verdure, which grew in wild profusion; a stream rippled beside us; wild flowers grew upon the banks—just as Rousseau described their growing a hundred and fifty years ago. The road itself, rough and uneven, threatened to shake the heavy vehicle to pieces; and H. and M. preferred walking to being pounded to jelly. At length we stopped, and looking upwards saw a small stone house upon the hill-side. It was les Charmettes. A short ascent and we stood in front of it. Certainly nothing could be more lovely and picturesque, more secluded, than this spot; and nothing could be more comfortless than the house. But in the early days of the last century people were less luxurious and refined than they are now; and it is quite possible to imagine that Rousseau and his companion—Madame de Warens—found, in this rude, stone-paved retreat, the happiness he paints in such vivid colours.

It seems to be very much in the state in which they left it. First we entered upon a bare room which served as their kitchen. It is now unfurnished and unoccupied. Next we passed into a room, stone-paved, that had been their dining-room. It contained nothing but a common wooden table and two or three chairs. On the walls hung a few paintings: one of Rousseau himself, another of Madame de Warens, representing her as a woman of beauty. Beyond this was their drawing-room. In one corner stood an old spinnet, on which Rousseau was wont to beguile the hours with his soft, sweet extemporising. A few chords, struck, awoke, dismal echoes that sounded like ghosts of his departed music. Nearly a hundred and fifty years since those walls had vibrated with his thoughts! How does he himself describe the spot:—

"Between two hills lies a small valley running north and south, at the bottom of which a brook ripples amidst trees and stones. Here and there down this valley, perched on the hill-side, you perceive a



solitary house, forming an agreeable residence to those who love a wild and isolated retreat. . . . Our house was pleasant and convenient. Before it was a garden laid out in terraces ; a vineyard above, an orchard below : immediately opposite, a small plantation of chestnuts, and close beside us a fountain : higher up in the mountains pasture for our cattle : in fact, every necessary requisite to our country life. As far as I can remember we took possession of it towards the end of the summer of 1736. I was enchanted with it the very first night of our arrival." (Rousseau's "Confessions.")

The interior of the house is altogether rude and unpolished. The short stone staircase, leading to the one floor above, is tolerably worn. The floor contains three rooms. One was Rousseau's bedroom ; the next that of Madame de Warens ; and a third occupied doubtless by a servant. The inspection of the whole place required not many minutes. But its charm consisted in being able to realize his descriptions ; in carrying oneself back a century and a half to the days when his voice and his music haunted the place, and his pen wrote down those thoughts which were to make him immortal.

Passing from the house on to the terrace, we gazed upon the outward scene Rousseau so much delighted in. There were the vineyards, the flower gardens, the grove of trees ; there was his arbour, and no doubt his bees were not far off—or their descendants. The height to our left concealed the exquisite view below ; and the town of Chambéry reposing in its lovely and fertile valley ; and the far-off hills towering beyond, with their rough ridges and their snow-peaks.

But here, too, the chief interest lay in imagining the scene as it was one hundred and fifty years ago ; in fancying that Rousseau's spirit was still hovering about the spot. To ponder over the life of this remarkable, but strange and unhappy man ; constantly battling with the good and evil within him, and ever allowing the latter to predominate. Unhappy in the very possession and consciousness of his genius, to which he was so often untrue, and by which he was raised above the sympathies and companionship of his fellow-men.

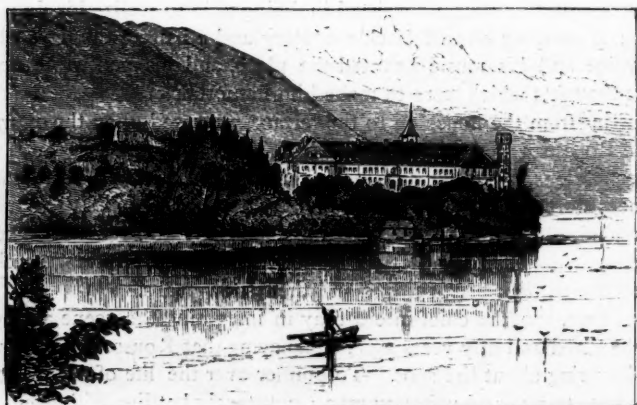
Yet he has somehow left a charm behind him which does not die ; nay, which seems to increase with time ; and nothing could exceed the dreamy, melancholy pleasure of gazing upon his old familiar and much-loved haunts. "What is Chambéry without Rousseau?" says Lamartine, in his "Raphael." "The man not only animates his fellow-men : he gives life to all Nature. He carries with him an immortality to Heaven, and leaves one upon earth, in those spots that he has consecrated by his presence."

We lingered until the last moment. M. begged a flower from the deaf and dumb gardener, who was at work in the garden ; and he, seeming to have fallen in love with her, threatened to strip his beds, as a mute offering of his adoration. At length H. declared he would

stay no longer. The beauties of Nature were all very well ; but what would compensate for an overdone breakfast? So, bidding adieu to les Charmettes and the shades of Rousseau, we once more mounted the nondescript, but decidedly uncomfortable, vehicle. Gradually winding down the valley, we at length found ourselves once more at the hotel.

The Cathedral was opposite its windows. An ugly building, of no particular style of architecture, its interior decorations of the florid Italian school, conspicuous by an absence of taste. We listened for a few moments to the sweet tones of the organ, which was then being played, and then went back to breakfast.

It was ready, and H. impatient. Our host waited upon us himself, whilst his decidedly better half could be heard in the distance, in loud



ABBEY OF THE HAUTE-COMBE.

commanding tones ordering her people hither and thither. Of a surety that woman was not loved by her domestics.

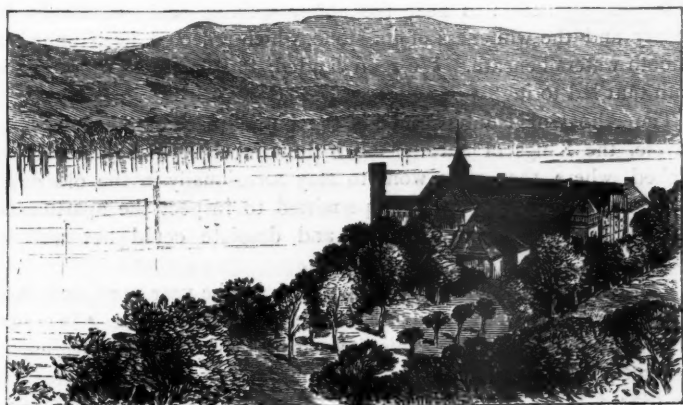
As soon as breakfast was ended, a basket carriage was driven up to the door by our late Jehu. Evidently with him necessity was the mother of invention. This, at any rate, was an improvement upon the two-wheeled ramshackle cabriolet.

The drive to the Lac du Bourget was less picturesque than we had been led to anticipate by our hostess. A long, straight road, which seemed to have neither ending nor turning. On either side the road a ditch holding muddy water. To our right hand the railroad. On both sides the mountains, but at a considerable distance : the plain or valley between lacking the richness, luxuriance, and variety of the valleys we had lately traversed. Where so much that is beautiful has to be described, it is a relief for a moment to record the opposite. Yet we

would not linger over it ; though it was the only bit of scenery that did not raise us to enthusiasm.

After a drive of an hour and a half we passed through a small village, and a few minutes later reached the lake. The carriage was now quitted for a boat, which, in the hands of two strong boatmen, quickly skimmed the water.

It was a delicious afternoon. The sun was shining, but not too powerfully. White clouds floated gently across the sky, and threw their shadows upon the smooth water and the surrounding heights. The abbey lay at the further end of the lake, and a long row was before us. The lake itself is between ten and twelve miles long, between three and four miles wide, and from three to four hundred feet deep. To our left hand the mountains rose steep and towering, wild-looking and barren.



LAC DU BOURGET.

Here, upon a jutting rock, high up, some one had built himself a castle that seemed impregnable. To our right was a long stretch of mountains. There, in a decline, was Aix-les-Bains, so resorted to, during the summer season, for its waters. Far away, a long white line in the mountain side, was the steam from a train, puffing its way to the fair shores of Geneva. This was one of Lamartine's favourite spots, and here Rousseau wrote some of the most celebrated passages in "*Emile*."

The Lac du Bourget is celebrated for its desolate and somewhat wild aspect : to luxuriance of vegetation it can lay no claim. Barren mountain sides, and seemingly inaccessible heights, where the eagles love to build their nests safe from intrusion. Here and there wild birds skimmed the water, or flew screaming far away beyond the mountains. We were close under the left bank of the lake. The right bank in the distance was of kinder and more genial aspect. The outlines of the mountains

were more undulating, and sloped gently to the water's edge : opening out to view, further on, was another grand mountain chain.

The choice that had fixed upon this spot for a sepulchre was to be admired. Rowing as we were, our faces turned to the left bank, there was something excessively funereal and solemn in the aspect of the lake and mountains. With the sun full upon it, the blue of the water rivalled the blue of the sky : but presently, when a bank of clouds rose up and overshadowed the lake, its waters turned to a cold, sombre, treacherous green, suggestive of cruel depths.

After a row of some distance we rounded a point, and came in sight of the abbey, built upon a strip of land jutting out upon the lake. Trees and shrubs grew about the building, and agreeably relieved the barrenness of the mountain which sloped behind it. Beyond this again other mountains stretched themselves.

It was impossible to near the abbey without being struck by its beauty and the whiteness of its stone, which reflected itself upon the smooth waters beneath. We soon landed, and began to wind up the path that led to it.

The Abbey of Haute-Combe is the burial place of the Princes of Savoie, the Kings of Sardinia. To the chapel royal a palace is attached, where they were wont to stay occasionally in the old days. At such times visitors were not permitted to inspect the apartments, and anything more quiet, retired, and desolate could not well be imagined.

The abbey was founded by St. Bernard in the year 1125, and from that date became the sepulchre of the Princes of Savoie. In 1792, when the French entered Savoie, it was sold by the French Government to some people who turned the church into a manufactory of porcelain. In 1824, Charles Felix repurchased the ruins, and had the abbey restored according to its original designs ; but the work was completed only twelve years after his death by his widow, Marie Christine. The chef d'œuvre of the chapel is a group in white Carrara marble, exquisitely chiselled by Albertoni, representing the queen protecting Art (in the form of a child whom her left arm encircles), whilst with her right hand she drops a piece of money into the hands of a youthful mendicant.

Since its restoration, the abbey has been occupied by monks of St. Bernard, whose mission is to guard the ashes, and to pray for the souls, of the dead and gone Princes of the House of Savoie.

We can imagine a funeral procession as it must have taken place whenever a prince died. The coffin borne in silence on its barque, followed by a long train of mourners in their boats, the oars silently and regularly cutting the water. Perhaps twilight would be deepening, throwing its weird gloom over an already gloomy and solemn scene : mysteriously concealing the crevices of the mountain sides, throwing its

shadows upon the dark water, changing the sunny blue of mid-day into the blackness of night. After a long row, during which no word had been spoken, no sound uttered : save the shrill scream of a night bird, hovering far above the mysterious progress, and wondering who went there disturbing its solitude : the landing-place was reached ; the oars were shipped ; the heavy burden, precious to its bearers, was lifted on men's shoulders ; a long train of mourners began to ascend the steep, winding path, and the body was carried to its last resting-place. So it has been many a time. So, if report be true, it is to be yet once again.

The abbey and its adjoining apartments ; those inhabited in the old days by the Royal Family and now kept up for show ; are worth a visit. The chapel is decorated in the florid style, tastefully carried out. The light is subdued by stained windows, which throw a glow over its monuments and pavement. As we entered, at the far end a monk was playing a harmonium, and its sweet sounds vibrated pleasantly through the arches, and seemed wonderfully to harmonize with the tone and colour of the interior. Another monk, in a large brown flannel cloak and capuchin, conducted us over the chapel, and very politely and kindly pointed out the various objects of interest. After that we visited the Royal apartments, and stood for some time enraptured at the beautiful view from its windows : a view of which the accompanying sketch can give but a faint idea.

But time was passing rapidly. We had a long row and a long drive before us, ere reaching Chambéry. We were soon again on the water, and the row back was almost pleasanter than it had been thitherwards. In due time we landed again, and at the end of our drive were not sorry towards eight o'clock to sit down to dinner. That important daily event over, we strolled for a time under the arcades and about the old town of Chambéry, admiring some of its ancient houses as they stood out beneath the pale moonlight. Above all, the old palace and chapel royal ; but the glory of the one has departed, and the other has long since been turned to civil uses.

"Now that we are here," suggested M., "we may as well to-morrow visit Annecy and its beautiful lake, before returning home."

H. could not quite see it. He did not care for so much running about. "I decidedly vote for returning home," said he. "At any rate, I mean to do so myself. If you two care to go on to Annecy without me, you are welcome to do so."

The matter was thus settled.

Later on, upon asking for bed candles, an amusing scene took place between the landlady and one of the waiters ; but it is much feared its point will be utterly lost without the presence and action of the worthy hostess.

Picture to yourself a mountain of a woman, with the gruff voice of a man, and something of his beard. With every sentence she uttered

her frame rose an inch; her bearing resembled that of a tragedy queen in her most tragic moments.

"Jules!" called out Madame, in such tones as might have waked the cardinal in his tomb over the way: "Jules! come here!"

Jules appeared. Jules evidently hated Madame cordially, and was prepared to be civilly insolent.

"Oui, Madame?"

"Where is the garçon-de-chambre?"

"I don't know, Madame."

"Call him."

"I have called him twenty times. I have no voice left. My throat is sore. If Madame had any humanity, she would give me something soothing to drink."

"No arguments! *CHERCHEZ-LE!*"

One hand was theatrically raised and pointed to the door; the other flourished upwards at the back of her head; her attitude was almost that of one about to commence fencing; the body was thrown back; the command was uttered in large capitals. "Mount Vesuvius in a state of eruption," whispered M. The simile was excellent.

The man disappeared, and in five minutes returned.

"I have found him at last, Madame. He had gone over the way to the Cathedral, to spend half an hour there at his prayers."

This of course was anything but the truth. The garçon had gone off to a café to have a game at billiards or dominoes; but the man did not wait the result of his impudence. The words uttered, he disappeared like lightning, deaf to Madame's stentorian "*ARRETEZ.*"

The garçon-de-chambre now made his appearance, and with lights and ceremony we were marshalled up the rickety old staircase to our respective apartments.

CHARLES W. WOOD.





## ONE DAY IN A SETTLER'S LIFE.

"IF you had had a grain of real love for me, you never would have dragged me out into this desolate wilderness," said Mrs. Roland Hardy, half sobbing, and really angry.

She arose, and flashed round to the window; there pressing her hot face so closely against the pane that her nose immediately began melting a grotesque pattern of herself in the sparkling frostwork. "Had you been a gentleman, Roland, you never would have thought of doing it."

When wives get into a passion they are apt to say things that they may hereafter bitterly regret. Mrs. Hardy was no exception. Her husband stood breathlessly silent, his face paling. They had not been married a year yet.

"Jane," he answered at last, in tones hard and cold, "if I had not thought you were willing, ay, and more than willing, to risk it, I should never have brought you, and you know it. Remember, I told you it would be a rough life; yet you were eager to come."

Jane Hardy remembered very well. But the memory of her ardent protestations, her generous forgetfulness of self, only angered her the more just now.

"How was I to know it would be like *this*? There! You can go if you are going. I should like to be alone—with all this work to do."

"I am going directly," was Mr. Hardy's answer, striving for tranquillity. "Will you be good enough to put up my luncheon? I shall not come back until night."

"Oh dear, yes," she replied with alacrity, bringing her face away from the window with a jerk; and proceeding to make a great clatter in the cupboard, which in this pioneer cabin was a combination of pantry and china closet.

"I fear there is but a short allowance of wood: will it last till evening?" asked Mr. Hardy, dubiously looking at the wood-box he had just replenished, and turning to brush up the bits of bark that had fallen on the neat rug-carpet. His words were kind, but his tone was as chilly as an icicle.

"There is plenty; do not trouble yourself," responded his wife resentfully, her eyes bent on the bread she was buttering.

In five minutes, man, dinner-pail, axe, and dog had vanished in the direction of the great forest; and the young wife was alone, as she had vehemently desired to be. Roland Hardy had gone forth to his day's work of felling timber.

Most young and angry wives would have burst into tears at this point.

Jane Hardy did not. She leaned against the rude mantel-shelf when her husband's footsteps no longer sounded in the crisp snow, and looked unutterably sad and hopeless, as if the light of her life had suddenly gone out ; looked remorseful, too, as if conscious of having had something to do with its annihilation.

The story is one of those often enough enacted in the New World. Certain expectations suddenly failing him, Roland Hardy manfully resolved to betake himself to the mighty woods, clear out a settlement for himself, erect his own house, Robinson Crusoe fashion : and in time, by dint of his hands' hard labour, become prosperous. Hardy, the settler, he would be then, with his farm lands around him, his flocks and herds, his people and his comforts. But all that would have to be patiently worked on for, and the beginning must, of necessity, be weary and toilsome. Jane Deane, to whom he was engaged, decided to go out with him : his wife. He told her he had better go on first, say for a year or two ; her friends urged the same advice ; but the young lady would not listen. So far as he was able, Mr. Hardy, before the marriage, described what their toil and their lonely life would be. Jane Deane looked at it with rose-coloured spectacles, and thought it would be charming, a kind of perpetual picnic. It is true she did not bargain for the help they had taken with them, in the shape of a man and a woman servant, deserting them speedily, tired with the new rough work, sick at the loneliness ; and those engaged in their places (after endless trouble and long negotiation) had not yet come. But she had put her own shoulder bravely to the wheel in the summer weather, and made light of hardships. It was winter now. And for the first time her temper had given way.

Everything seemed to have gone wrong in the cabin that morning ; and her husband's calm cheerfulness through it all had provoked her most unwarrantably. But she was not feeling well.

It is possible that many of us have such mornings—mornings when everything animate, and inanimate, conspires to bring to the surface the original gorilla that slumbers within the soul. These vexations have to be beaten down promptly under one's feet, and Mrs. Hardy had stooped to squabble with hers. A dear little rose had been discovered frozen, though wrapped in flannel and placed in the warmest corner of the burrow under the floor, called, as a matter of dignity, the cellar. To be sure, the potatoes had been kindly spared : but what were gross potatoes when lovely Lamarque buds drooped in death ? Mourning over them, Mrs. Hardy forgot the milk-toast, and the milk-toast indignantly boiled over. Catching the pan from the stove, lo ! a splash of hot milk fell on the front breadth of her clean crisp French gingham, and another on the ear of poor David, stretched on the hearth, and the dog howled responsively. At another time Jane would have laughed ; but laughing was very far from her mood this morning ; life in general was

looking depressedly gloomy; and when Mr. Hardy came into this atmosphere of burnt milk and piteous dog-whinings, she was declaring, in her fervid way, that housekeeping out west was simply villainous, and that she hated it—here she caught his provokingly smiling eyes—yes; hated it, and him, and the place, and everything.

He met the words jokingly, and it incensed her. In her angry spirit she said unforgivable things, and Mr. Hardy was provoked into retorting. So they jarred and jangled through breakfast. That is, *she* did.

For some little time Roland Hardy had feared that a sort of suppressed discontent was taking possession of his wife. She was quieter at times, almost sad, and less given to laughter than in their old bright days, as he had got to calling them. He had hoped everything of her love and devotion—hoped that he might ever remain as near and dear, as much “all the world” to her as she had often declared him to be. And now this had come of it; this dreadful quarrel. She had spoken out her mind.

His heart was aching with her reproaches; but, generous ever, he excused her to himself as he walked along to the woods. It was asking too much of mortal woman, he argued, anxious to make himself wretched, to tear her far away from home, and friends, and all the comfortable delights of well-regulated New England life, and to expect her to be always glad, and buoyant, and brave, and hopeful, keeping his own soul up with the wine-like tonic of her blithe spirits. No. It was the same old beginning of the end, a mere question of time. Eventually she would become the indifferent, matter-of-fact sort of woman that most wives appeared to be; regarding him—the lover—as a kind of mild, inevitable evil, necessary to her support, and respectable to have about the home. Sooner or later, he supposed, all husbands and wives awoke from their dream of love, to the long, dreary reality of making the best of things. Nevertheless, her fierce outburst on this particular morning took him by surprise; somewhat aroused his indignation. Had it not been her free choice to enter on this “villainous” housekeeping? Had he not warned her freely and fully that her days, if she came with him, would be anything but a bed of roses? Was not life harder for him, inexpressibly harder, than it had ever been, a totally different thing altogether; but he bore on perseveringly and untiringly, looking to the end in view, and making matters light for her sake. Suppose—suppose—a flush dyed the young man’s patient face as the thought occurred to him—suppose she refused to stay here and went home to her friends?

Meanwhile, Mrs. Hardy stood on by the mantelpiece, horribly miserable—more miserable than she had ever dreamed of being in any of the love-quarrels that had flickered their courtship. There seemed to be no “making-up” in this sort of thing; there was no light in it:

it was unmitigated, hopeless wretchedness. For Mrs. Jane Hardy, her passion over, was chewing the husks of bitter repentance. He did not love her any more ; he could not ; or he never would have said harsh things to her ; and this was the end of it all !

"To call me 'Jane' !" she exclaimed aloud, as if the word "Jane" contained all forms of vituperation. "Nobody has been cruel enough to call me that in all my life !" turning to the breakfast dishes with a bravely-conquered sob. For this young lady, who had been a pet at home, had never been called by her husband, or by anybody else, by a harder name than Jenny.

Work is so good a thing ! Auerbach says it should have been the first commandment : "Thou shalt work !" Jenny was too unfamiliar with heart-torture to be conscious of how good her work was : but she could not but be aware, as the morning passed away, that something was driving the clouds out of her sky. Roland could not despise her all at once, she was sure. She would gather up the remnant of his love, and guard and nourish it so tenderly that, like her poor Lamarque rose, it must still lift itself to the sun again, and some time blossom into a little beauty of sweetness, and so make life endurable. She would, in so many noble and heroic ways, prove to him—but no ; how could she do that ?—there was nothing noble or heroic to do. Women's lives—ordinary women's lives, like hers—had no heroic chances. She could only keep his house in nice order, cook his favourite dishes, watch over his shirt-buttons, forget the old days of ease when she was a listless young lady, and never, never, never lose her temper again. It was all dreadfully commonplace, and of no account, but she had embraced this lot of her own free will, and out of her deep love for him, and it was the only way by which she could hope to climb to the heights of his regard again. As for his old romantic love for her, his tender chivalrous devotion, that could never come back ; she wasn't worth it. And so, accepting the dust of humiliation, and, like a genuine woman, having no mercy on herself, she went through the household duties, thinking all the time how dear to her were husband and home, and how she would strive to made herself endurable, please God, to them.

It was a decidedly pleasant log-cabin. Log-cabins are always pleasant when an apt housekeeper presides over them, and enough of the world's *Jucre* can be afforded to cover the walls with tasteful paper, and the floor with comfortable carpets. Those rude logs, of which we read, with their thatched roofs, clay floors, and chimneys built of sticks, are far more endurable on canvas and in the rhymes of young poets, than in actual life, where they mean simply rheumatism and insects. This house was different ; it was a spacious, comfortable, well-furnished place ; and only called a log-cabin after the custom of the country.

A staunch roof ; substantial walls, ornamental within ; carpet, books, pictures, a rare clock, easy chairs : everything for comfort

met the eye. The sleeping rooms above gave evidence of ingenious and tasteful powers brought to bear upon their building and furnishing. Charming expedients, graceful rustic ornamentations, pretty and useful things that cost little, made the cabin seem very much of a cosy mansion in a small way. In the midst of an almost savage wilderness, Roland Hardy had erected his dwelling with a view rather to future exigencies than present needs ; and he and his wife both possessed the gift of "making the most of things."

And it is surprising how deftly in these remote homes a woman, though she may have been gently born and reared, soon learns to accomplish the needful daily work. Where there's a will there's a way ; and Jane Hardy had learnt to take a pleasure and a pride in it.

By noon to-day the work was done, and the house in the trimmest order. White loaves, just from the oven, were diffusing their fresh yeasty fragrance ; the week's ironing hung warm and spotless across the clothes-horse. On the table smoked an exceedingly lonesome cup of tea ; and over it leaned the pensive young housekeeper, pretending to do justice to her solitary luncheon

Her thoughts were away in the snowy woodland with him, her husband ; who was doubtless, about this time, eating prairie-chicken and clammy bread-and-butter. "He might build a fire, and give it a little roast on a stick," she pensively murmured ; and then she felt how very glad she should be when night should come, and she could, in many furtive ways, confess to him how sorry she was, how deeply in need of his dear love.

It was nearly three o'clock when, mechanically looking through the window in the direction of the forest, she was surprised to see the dog, David, making for the house in a wavering, uncertain way, as if he had half a mind to turn back to the woods. David had more than once wearied of the monotony of watching wood-chopping, and come to the house an hour or two in advance of his master ; so there was nothing startling in his coming now. He scratched at the door in his usual obsequious fashion ; darted to devour, when admitted, a morsel of bread and meat ; but, quitting it instantaneously, went and sat down before his mistress with the air of having something to say, and began to whine.

David was not a remarkable dog : not at all any dog in particular. He was yellow and undersized, with only a white spot on his forehead by way of ornament ; and he was inclined to be lazy. He had come to them one stormy night, a lame, starving vagrant from some emigrant train, and kind-hearted Roland fed him, put liniment on his leg, and called him David, after a faithful dog he had recently possessed, and lost. And David contentedly remained, exhibiting no marked talent for anything, and sometimes betraying a lack of decent intelligence. His mental faculties had been dwarfed by persistent ill-treatment, Mr.



Hardy thought; the dog seemed to be *cowed*. One peculiarity of his was, that he never asked for food. He was the most unobtrusive, retiring sort of animal that ever yearned for cold meat. If meat came to him, well and good; but he never uttered a whine, or gave one beggarly wag of his tail to indicate that he was hungry. He would not have done it if he were starving. Jenny was wont to say that he was poor, but proud. So to-day, when he planted himself before his mistress, and looked at her with all the soul he had in his eyes, and whined like a professional beggar, he was regarded with a good deal of astonishment.

"More dinner, David? Is it possible you have brought yourself to ask for more dinner?"—going to the cupboard and carving a bone for him.

David looked hurt. Nevertheless, he took the bone gently, carried it to his rug in the corner, and left it. That caused Mrs. Hardy to look at the rug, which she had not done before; and then she saw that he had not eaten his dinner. The dog returned to his old position, whining before her as she sat.

"Oh, it is water, then!"

No, it was not water. He retreated from the basin with an air of increased injured feeling, and continued to regard his mistress with appealing eyes. All at once some instinct penetrated to Jenny's mind, and her heart gave a great leap of fear.

"David! David! Is it your master? Is it Roland?"

The dog made a bounce of joyous relief, as if glad of being understood at last, and trotted to the door, casting a look back at her over his shoulder. If ever a look said plainly, Come on, that look did.

"I will come, old fellow," said Jenny, going to the wardrobe, and hurriedly getting out some wraps and her fur-lined overshoes. "Something is the matter with the dog, and it may be that. At any rate, there will be no harm in my running out to the woods," she added, with a nervous little laugh. "Roland need not know how silly I am: I can say that I wanted to find lichens."

The sun was disappearing behind a cold, hazy horizon; a chilly wind whirled the snow-clouds across the level plain, ferreted out the fallen leaves, that strove to hide from it, and sent them scudding on again. The still radiance of the winter day was giving place to an early and boisterous night; to such a night that will not be forgotten in that country by living man or woman.

In her staunch overshoes, short cloth skirt, and shaggy walking-jacket, a costume in which she had tramped many a time with her husband on expeditions to the distant post-office, where a blacksmith's shop and a grocery store had put their heads together and declared themselves a city, Mrs. Hardy prepared to start. But she first of all unlocked a small store chest, and excavated from its depths a sealed



bottle, with "Catawba Grape" written in homely chirography on its deliciously dingy label.

"My dear old father!" she exclaimed, by no means addressing herself to the bottle; but, with dim eyes, thinking of the kind hands that were young hands when they made this wine; which, from its age and strength, was, as a cordial, equal to brandy. The hands were old hands now; capable of little but writing her shaky letters from the dear old homestead. "Who knows but Roland may be past its aid; that some dreadful accident—but I won't think of it. And who knows but I may meet him trudging homewards; and he will ask me what on earth I have brought out the wine for? But he shan't see it: I will not show it: and to-morrow I shall laugh at myself for these foolish fears."

Talking thus incoherently, but doubtless thinking connectedly enough, she poured out a flaskful of the wine, secured it in her pocket, threw her husband's scarf over her arm, and told David she was ready. At which word the dog gave another appreciative bounce, and fairly flew past her as she opened the door.

But, once in the path leading to the forest, David seemed to have had his brief flicker of intelligence taken out of him. Instead of trotting on and leading his mistress in the right way, following the recorded example of all sensible dogs, he held back shrinkingly, evidently declining to take an active part in the search, or to lead it. It was just as though he meant to say, "I have done my part: you go on and do yours."

"You are an awful idiot, David; or else I am!" snapped Jenny. But David only meekly curled his tail and trotted behind her.

The forest, or the "wood-lot," as Roland called it, catching the word from other settlers, was a good mile away. Mr. Hardy's acres covered an amount of ground that would have turned his late New England neighbours dizzy with its vastness. It would soon yield him an ample return; at present, during these preliminary struggles, it was not much more than a living. But in the event of a certain phantom railroad becoming a real railroad, he would make a speedy fortune.

The path was rough. Roland's boots alone had formed it, tramping backwards and forwards to his tree-felling. Generally he paced it four times a day, going home for the mid-day dinner. The drifting snow hid treacherous holes that well-nigh went to break Jenny's ankles, as she stumbled on. The wind, growing every moment more violent, pushed her on with a giant hand; sharp needle-points of snow smote her neck. "It will be rather sharp going home," she said, shivering, and pulling her scarf closer.

In October she had come to the woods for autumn leaves, and the spot was, in a degree, familiar to her. But the path seemed to disperse and lose itself after entering the thicker parts; and she had to

direct her way by the piles of wood that had been cut in places where the trees could be most conveniently felled. If they had not said those dreadful words to each other! if they were only as they had been yesterday when Roland loved her! she might not have felt so desperately anxious. How was she to find him? She called again and again, but the wind overpowered her voice.

There was no sound of the axe. As she paused, listening intently, she could hear nothing but the dreary whistle of the blast through the naked trees, and the sharp, sifting sound of the snow as it smote their trunks.

"David, where is Roland?—where is your master? Go and find him this minute!"—impatiently menacing the cowering dog in her terror. "Find your master, there's a good dog," she added, in a coaxing tone of entreaty, patting the poor animal, who stood before her with drooping head. "Good David! good old dog!"

David went on then. In the lowest natures is sometimes enshrined the pearl of delicate feeling. This dog had bad news to tell, and shrank from telling it. He made no pretence to a light-hearted pace. He crept, halted, and seemed anxious to defer something.

Leading the way over a freshly-felled log, then another, and turning a thicket of young oaks, that caught at Jenny's skirts as if they would fain hold her back from a painful sight, he came to a halt. There was no reason why he should go farther.

A tree had evidently fallen in an unlooked-for direction: or, perhaps Roland Hardy had been a little reckless. It had swept him to the ground, and was lying across his legs; as immovable, to him, as a mountain. On the rough bark, where he had been able to reach it with his knife, was cut "Dear Jen—," showing that he had not intended to call her "Jane" on this occasion. But the fond work, which perhaps was intended as a last memento, had ceased. His arms were lying at his sides now, and a fleck of blood stained his blue lips. Jenny thought it was the life crushed out of him; but it only came of his long and vain struggles to free himself.

She did not scream. It was not her way. She rushed forward to fling herself against the fallen tree; pushing it, beating it, bruising her shoulders against it, like some mad woman. This was her first impulse; and it availed nothing. Then she sank down at her husband's side, wiped the red drops from his mouth, and covered his face with kisses that might have kissed the dead into life. The kisses made Roland faintly stir, and he moved his hand instinctively toward the knife, which had fallen in the snow. He was wanting to finish his message.

"Roland! Roland!" she cried in an anguished voice, seizing his benumbed hands in hers, and pressing them to her face and to her warm, throbbing throat. "Oh, if he could only speak to me once more!" she piteously moaned. "Only once more!"

"Is it—Jenny?" came struggling faintly from his lips.

"Yes, it is Jenny. I am here! I am here to die with you, my own blessed heart! Oh, what can I do?" raising his head tenderly to her breast. "Oh, my husband, look at me—speak to me! Are you terribly hurt?"

But, though he opened his eyes and looked at her, he could not answer.

Then she remembered the wine; and, filling the tiny cup at the bottom of the flask, she held it to his mouth. Roland drank the wine with difficulty: partly because he was only half-conscious, and partly because Jenny, in her wild solicitude, seemed bent on pitching the whole down his throat without waiting for the little formality of swallowing. She continued to rain the tenderest expressions upon him. Over his features began stealing something that, under the depressing circumstances, looked singularly like a pleased surprise. The eyes opened wider with a look of recognition, and a heaven of love shone up into Jenny's terror-stricken face. He laboriously flung his arm about her neck, and murmured her name again, as if it would express the tenderness of his whole soul.

"Are you crushed to death, dear Roland?" illogically cried Jenny.

"Not quite. But I'm so tired! I have been buried under this horrible log these four hours."

"Thank God you are not killed!" she aspirated. "Tell me what I can do."

"Poor child, you can do nothing. If a man were here with a hand-spike——"

His voice ceased: ceased in very hopelessness. The nearest man was probably two miles off. And before he could be found and brought, even if Jenny could find him, life might have gone out.

"I will do it," said Jenny. "Tell me where I can find a hand-spike."

"*You* could not do it, child."

"But I will," she returned cheerily. "I studied natural philosophy at school, and I have plenty of muscle. Did not somebody say he could move the world if—if he only had things to do it with; a lever, and that. I can cut down something for a lever, Roland."

She was speaking in sheer desperation. But a desperate woman can put out an incredible amount of strength: and the stake at issue was her husband's life. Roland saw how full of energy she looked; what an amount of determination her whole attitude betrayed. It imparted some degree of hope even to him, and he pointed to a pile of oak rails.

"If you could drag one of those here——"

She was flying for the rail before the words left his lips; had

brought it to the spot, and then began to try to lift the fallen tree. But the grim burden refused to move.

"Oh, Jenny ——"

"I see, Roland," she interrupted. "Don't be afraid. Of course I am stupid at first. Wait! I am undertaking to do too much at once, you perceive."

Jenny partly withdrew the lever, making the resistance less, and lifted again, with some effect. Roland's legs were too much like dead legs to be aware of the lightened pressure upon them; but he saw the log move a little.

Stars swam before Jenny's eyes, and the veins on her forehead looked like little knotted cords, as, averting her face from him, she strained at the lever once more with all her whole might. "Now!" she cried. He essayed to move his half-frozen limbs, but only succeeded in groaning. "They are dead as stones," he gasped; and looked as though he were going off into another faint.

Just for a moment she paused in despair. But courage and increased energy came back to her.

"Drink this, Roland," she said, putting out some more of the sustaining cordial. "I must prop up the log; and I think, dear, you can help me."

Selecting a larger rail, she dragged it up, and commanded him to push it under the log while she lifted with the lever. Reviving under the influence of her cheerful courage, he saw this as his golden and perhaps only opportunity. There was no man's aid within reach of this lonely spot, and night was coming down, bringing a tempest with it. The rail was placed; and, pushing it with all his remaining strength, he held each atom that the log yielded; while Jenny took breath to gain one more. Slowly and reluctantly the fallen tree was forced to acknowledge itself beaten, and at last rested on the prop. The man was free!

David got off his haunches, and wagged his tail.

Roland pressed his lips to the snow-wet hem of Jenny's skirt. The mute, eloquent act made her heart overflow, but she caught her skirt away hurriedly.

"I cannot allow you one minute's delay, Roland. It will be a horrible night. Do you think you can stand?"

With her help, he got upon his feet, but not until he had made more than one attempt. The legs were not broken, then: and this took a dreadful fear from Jenny's heart. But the returning circulation gave him intense pain. Leaning on his wife's proffered arm, he at length began to move homewards. The stormy twilight was already filling the forest. Managing to limp and stumble along, the outskirts of the wood were reached before absolute darkness had set in.

But until now they had not realized the terrible might of the storm.

It grew worse with every minute. David alone was able to distinguish the path that led homeward. Around them appeared nothing but the whirling snow. The forest was shut out, as by the sudden fall of a gigantic curtain; before them could be discovered nothing but the wavering form of David, as he wrestled with the difficulties of the path.

"We must walk for dear life!" gasped Roland.

He felt now all the hazard and terror of their position. It was almost impossible to breathe in the face of this fierce gale. If they lost the path, or the strength of either gave out, the result would be death.

They stumbled on, their arms entwined, making no attempt to speak after this. Once Jenny caught at David, patted his shoulder, and murmured that he was a good fellow, a brave dog; but she and her husband had enough to do for themselves.

It seemed to both that they must be nearly at home. Probably more than half the distance had been got over, when a calamity occurred. David disappeared. He was missing! Had their trusty pilot deserted them? Yes; for not a trace of him could be heard or seen. Roland shouted his name; but the wind dashed his voice back again, so that he scarcely heard it himself, and he had no hope of recalling the fugitive.

They were off the path now—the softer snow told them this; and they were both very cold, and alarmingly exhausted. Roland thought that this was the end; that all hope was over. He clasped his wife closely in his arms, and bowed his head on her shoulder. If he had not been half dead at the outset, with suffering and exhaustion, he would have borne up more bravely. As it was, he felt that his senses were taking leave of him; and he knew that if he failed, and he thought he had failed, he was laying down not only his own life, but a dearer life than his.

"Go on—leave me. Try to reach ——" he began saying in her ear. But Jenny would not listen to him. His despairing words filled her with frenzied strength.

"People talk that way when they are freezing," she thought. "He shall not die. Pray, Heaven, help me! Bear up, Roland. Just a little while longer! We must be pretty near the house. I still know enough to keep my face to the wind."

"I cannot go on further, Jenny. I must lie down and sleep."

"Never!" answered poor Jenny. "We will not give up. It is only frozen people who want to sleep. Oh, Father of all mercy, help us! If we may only reach our sweet, sweet home once more! If I may only have strength to save my dear heart! to make him know how I love him above everything in the world."

Thoughts like these were flitting through her brain as she struggled

on, almost falling at every step. Oh, the cruelly lengthened distance! Would they never touch anything else but snow—blinding, stinging, bewildering snow? Had it swept away house, fence, trees, everything, and left them nothing but this endless plain, where, sooner or later, they must sink down to their fatal rest?

Roland staggered, and fell heavily forward, casting her arm away from him. It was a gesture of farewell. For one instant it seemed to Jenny that it would be very sweet to fling herself down beside him and fall asleep. An aching weariness filled her limbs; her very heart seemed turning to ice.

Yet she would not give up. Energy, struggle, meant either life or death, as she should use or non-use, them. She partly raised poor Roland from the snow, and tried to shout encouraging words, but her lips were benumbed, and it was like shouting behind the torrent of Niagara.

It was when Jenny began desperately to drag him on by main force that Roland rallied a little, and showed signs of resistance. It was an ungallant thing for a man to permit a woman to carry him, or partially to carry him, he dimly thought, striving to free himself from her grasp. All his faculties were dulled. But the more he resisted, the more Jenny persevered. She always believed afterwards that God gave her strength.

It was while she was dragging, and coaxing, and lifting, and beating him, all at the same time, and luring him on with the sweetest and tenderest words, that a most heavenly sound swept across her half-delirious senses. The lowing of the cow! The cow, anxious for shelter and supper!

Then it was that the poor exhausted young woman felt that she should swoon herself; that she should die: the rebound from despair to hope was so sudden. On him, if he heard it, the sound made no impression. In that stage of apathy he would have unresistingly passed away to death, though the very firelight of home, so to say, was beaming from its windows upon him.

"Oh, merciful Father, help him!—let him not die now!" prayed Jenny. And with desperate energy she pulled him on; pulled, and pulled, and pulled. And the house was gained at last.

Fortunately, the fire had almost gone out in the stove, and the room had a healthful chill in its atmosphere, that was better suited than comfortable warmth to partly frozen people. It seemed an eternity to Jenny before she could command her fingers sufficiently to light the lamp. The lamp lighted, she had to crawl upstairs and fling down blankets and pillows, in which she buried her husband, first gladdening herself with the assurance that he was alive, and probably not badly frozen. Then she turned her attention to the fire. She regretted having said so haughtily, in that far-off morning—ages ago, it seemed—that



there was plenty of wood. There was no wood left now: she had put the last on before going out. But Mrs. Hardy had not survived the cruel tempest to perish for the lack of an armful of fuel. Her husband might die yet, if not properly cared for. She could not rest, she could not breathe, until he should speak to her again, and assure her that he was going to live.

She carried the lamp to the window, and shading her face with her hand, looked out. The wood-pile, whenever the driving snow permitted a glimpse, was a discouraging sight, only a log showing here and there, like the fin of a buried whale. Jenny shrugged her shoulders ruefully, and turned away. Then she bethought herself of a stack of wonderful knots and grotesque little stumps, which Roland had from time to time stored in a corner of the loft; to be worked up, when help in his labour should arrive and he had consequently more leisure, into vases and hanging-baskets for the house-plants. It seemed a pity to burn these; but pity must give way to necessity; and, without a moment's hesitation, Jenny re-ascended the stairs, and made a plentiful selection from them. They were dry as tinder; and in a short time a noble fire crackled and roared in the big stove, and Roland Hardy was oh-ing and ah-ing under his blankets with the pain of returning warmth.

The glowing consciousness that she had saved him bore Jenny up. Her own exhaustion was almost unfelt, her eyes sparkled triumphantly; and as she put the kettle over the fire, and got out Roland's slippers and some dry clothing, and placed them by the stove to warm, her heart was giving vent to praises of thankfulness.

She drew the wide, comfortable sofa to the fire, and heated its cushions. Then she stooped and took her husband's face in her hands.

"Oh Roland, do you know what a fearful tramp we have had? Do you know that we were freezing to death only a short while ago?"

Roland did not know anything very clearly as yet; but he grew conscious of being by the fire, wrapped in warm blankets; when, as he vaguely remembered, his last act was to lie down in the snow.

"What was done?" he presently asked. "How did we get here? Who helped us?"

"Angels!" replied Jenny.

"You must have brought me—and you may have killed yourself!" cried Roland: a glimmer of intelligence beginning to light up his eyes.

"Roland, dear, I am not dead yet. I don't mean to die, by Heaven's good will. And now I am going to pull off your boots."

"Oh, Jenny——"

But remonstrance was idle. He was thrust back on the pillows, and

his boots removed, with great difficulty, and many tragic flourishes and solemn remarks concerning his inordinate vanity in wearing such tight ones. Poor Jenny, in the joy of their escape, strove to make merry.

She was saying, as she put them away, that she would next get him into bed, and make him a cup of coffee; and Roland was struggling to free himself from the blankets, and vowing that he would have no more nonsense, when the room began whirling around her. "I feel so ridiculously faint," she said, as he started up; and the next moment she had fallen into his extended arms.

Her first sensation on coming to herself was a consciousness of intense comfort, mingled with a luxurious, drowsy wish that it might last for ever. Present time had faded from her. She fancied she was a child again, tenderly borne upon her mother's breast, and nestling among soft pillows. She heard the lambs bleating upon the green hill-sides, the brown thrush singing in the sweet-briar hedges; the perfumes of clover-blossoms and of June roses seemed softly to sweep over her, touching her face like cool, sweet, shadowy hands; and she nestled closer among the pillows, and slept.

Her next consciousness was that of a man stumbling over a chair, and uttering in consequence a mild imprecation. She opened her eyes. The grey light of the late winter morning filled the little cabin. She was lying in one of her best night-gowns, tucked up in high state on the sofa; and it was the tea-kettle she had heard in her dreams, and the Cologne water on her face and hands that had seemed to her like the breath of summer fields. Close beside her was the arm-chair where Roland had sat and watched through the night. Her boots and snow-wet clothes were strewn recklessly about the floor; wine, camphor, the coffee-pot, and the chapped-hands lotion occupied the table; the bathtub was tilted up by the wood-box; the wardrobe bore evidence of having been turned topsy-turvy; and David was calmly slumbering on her best shawl. The devastating power of man had been let loose in that orderly little house.

Poor David! He had got home then. He must have lost his way as they did.

Roland Hardy, awkwardly busy after man's fashion, and alternately regarding his wife, lest his movements had awakened her, looked half-bewildered. His manly face was softened by a look of the keenest and tenderest solicitude, interspersed with perplexity as to the household arrangements. He had just poured some water into the tea-kettle, and was looking helplessly about for the cover.

"On the top of the coffee-mill, dear," spoke up Jenny encouragingly. And she was surprised at the weak, tired sound of her own voice.

He came swiftly to her side, and knelt down. Jenny drew his head closely to her breast. "Dear heart!" she whispered "I am so glad we are alive!"

It was a long while before Roland spoke : and when he did, it was in a choking voice.

"I talked to you like a ruffian yesterday."

"No, dear, it was I who did that."

"It all came back to me in the night ; and, with it, how you dragged me out of the jaws of death. You saved my life, Jenny."

"Because your life is so dear to me ! I was only selfish, you see."

"And you risked your own life," he continued, softly. "I ought to have cut my tongue out, Jenny, before saying to you a cross word. Oh, my best and sweetest !"

A beautiful blush stole over her face, a smile parted her lips.

"Roland, you *know* it was all my fault, all my temper. But, *my* dear, I think this night has cured us both of ill temper for ever. And oh, how delightful seems to me the home here that I grumbled at."

Yes, it no doubt read an effectual lesson to both of them. There are enough real ills in life without creating imaginary ones. And this true picture of a day in a settler's existence may perhaps serve as a lesson to us, by making us more contented with our own civilized lot.



## A MEETING.

THERE was a performance of Meyerbeer's "Huguenots." The opera-house that evening was full, almost to suffocation. The multitude followed with breathless attention the beautiful melodies and harmonies of this great composition. I made one of the listeners on this occasion ; and, as the well-known scenes were enacted before me, there came up vividly to my mind's eye a vision of the evening, many years before, on which I had first learned how to comprehend the full beauty and significancy of the music in this opera.

To tell of that evening is the purpose I have in view in writing this sketch.

As a young girl, I had the good fortune to possess a kind and indulgent aunt, with whose appearance at our home in Berlin I had, from long experience, come to associate joyous expectations of some happy surprise, or approaching delightful treat. She usually lived on her own property through every winter, but, in the year 1855, she paid us a sudden visit in the middle of December, and I at once began looking forward to some coming pleasure. I had not deceived myself.

Her physicians had ordered her to travel southwards for the benefit of her health, and she had come to persuade my father to allow me to be her companion during her journey, and for all the winter months which she intended spending in Venice. It had long been the chief desire of my heart to see this beautiful city, and my sixteen-year-old heart beat tumultuously with delight, as I fell upon her neck and overwhelmed her with kisses.

In our northern land the cold weather had already set in with severity, and the roofs of all the houses were covered with snow ; but in my youthful enthusiasm I seemed to feel beforehand the balmy air and soft breezes which I fancied I was to enjoy in Italy. Frosty days and cold winds are not things to be even thought of in connection with the land of orange blossoms. And yet I shiver now, as I recall to mind a few out of the many damp, unpleasant afternoons and sharp chill evenings and mornings that I have passed under Italian skies. In countries where keen cold weather is a long and habitual winter guest we make all due preparations to receive him properly ; but woe to the poor Southcountryman when Jack Frost steals upon him ; he is never expected, and comes as a very enemy.

The first shock I received, in my preconceived rose-coloured ideas of the perpetual beauty and sunshine to be enjoyed in Italy, came on

the third day of our journeying towards Venice. The rain fell in torrents, and a thick cloud of mist obscured the distant prospect, while the landscape around us, as we neared Palma Nuova, was flat and uninteresting, only enlivened by rows of gloomy-looking olive-trees. The horses were weary, and stumbled now and again in their monotonous trot. The coachman seemed out of temper, and tried in vain to rouse his steeds to more vigorous movement with his whip.

My aunt was ailing, and very tired. I felt depressed and out of heart. My dreams of ever green fields, of skies always serene and blue, of golden sunshine, and balmy breezes, had all proved vain. The reality, I said to myself, is this : and I drew my cloak tremblingly around me, as I looked up at the leaden clouds, and down at the dull landscape. We were right glad to reach an hotel in Palma Nuova, where we determined to spend the night, and my aunt went off to bed at once, attended by her maid, leaving me alone to entertain myself in our private sitting-room.

Although the town at which we had stopped is admired by many for its fine fortifications and water privileges, and though I learned that it had been built in 1593 by my favourite Venetians, I could, on this evening, see no beauty anywhere. I stood at the closed window, and looked peevishly out at the straight, melancholy, empty streets, which lay inches deep in mud ; and I began to long for my dear, comfortable home, with its well-warmed, cheerful, well-lighted rooms ; for my interesting books ; and, above all, for my beautiful piano, upon which it was my custom to play every evening.

I glowered over with discontent at the little morsel of fire which had been lit in the large open grate, and which could not possibly warm this enormous room. For the first time in my life I felt out of humour with my aunt, who had brought me to this wearisome place. There is no more ungrateful office in the world than that of a kind, good-natured aunt. I would sooner be anything in the world than such an aunt ! Let but the least little thing go wrong, and we nephews and nieces are sadly forgetful of all the love and kindness shown.

The master of the house brought up some refreshments, and began to talk to me ; and, for want of something better to do, I talked to him in return, and complained of the silence and stupidity of his house. He told me that usually his hotel was, about this time, one of the busiest in the town, as it was patronised by all the officers of the garrison, but that they had been bidden this evening to a great entertainment given by the commander-in-chief.

As the Albergo was quite deserted, therefore, the host suggested that the Signorina should condescend to go down to a room near the great dining-hall. In this room there was a piano, kept for the amusement of guests, and as the Signorina seemed in need of diversion, it might entertain her to play for a while. The Eccellenza should, he

promised, find herself quite undisturbed, as there were no other guests in the house.

I warmly welcomed the idea of thus whiling away, somewhat pleasantly, a portion of this long, dreary winter's evening : and after having told my aunt's maid where she could find me, in case I should be wanted, I followed my new friend into what he called the music-room, passing through the dining-hall in order to reach it.

The piano was a wretched affair, out of tune and out of order in every way, but nevertheless I felt very happy, as my fingers strayed over it. I was only an amateur player, and I have never been anything else, but I had much taste, and I believe much talent also, for music ; and my father had taken care that I should always have the best masters the city of Berlin could afford for my instruction.

I could play from memory almost everything I had ever learned, and therefore the gathering gloom of the evening proved no hindrance to my enjoyment. When my host brought in lights I was beginning to play as much as I could remember of the music from the "Huguenots," which had not then been long published. The piano stood against the wall, opposite to the door opening out into the dining-hall, to which door I therefore had my back turned as I played.

I had commenced playing the conspirators' chorus in the second act, and was endeavouring to execute it perfectly, when I heard a voice, close behind me, say :

"You are playing that chorus quite incorrectly, *Fraülein*. Your execution is not equal for the difficulty of the music. You do not play clearly."

I turned round in startled surprise. I was so engrossed in my music that I had heard no footstep in the room since the landlord had left me. I was therefore amazed to see now, at my side, a man past middle age. He was slight and small, and carried himself weakly, and somewhat as though it were an effort to keep upright. His hair was quite grey, but a pair of luminous brown eyes, full of almost youthful fervour, lit up his face.

Although many years have passed, I think I can still see all the varying expressions of those eyes. They could look soft and dreamy, or eager and excited ; and again they often, a little later on, gazed down upon me with fatherly benevolence.

Just then, however, I was full of angry indignation at what I considered a most intolerable piece of impertinence offered to me by a perfect stranger. I could find no words in which to express my resentment. To think that an insignificant nobody should presume to find fault with my style of playing ! when I had been taught by the best masters money could pay for ; and when I was the most admired and praised of performers in our whole large home circle of musical friends and acquaintances.



My vanity was sorely wounded, and my pride hurt ; but I thought it beneath me to take any notice either of the stranger or of his remarks, and I silently recommenced playing, and went on as if there had come no interruption to my performance of the chorus. But I know not how it happened : my memory failed me, my fingers refused to touch the right notes, and I certainly did now play incorrectly and badly. A second time the stranger spoke, close to my ear.

"That last passage, *Fraülein*, was entirely wrong. You seem to fancy it ought to be played fortissimo, while I can assure you it is marked '*adagio maestoso*.'"

These words were spoken in a tone of quiet superiority, and the speaker had a slight smile about the corners of his lips. But his very calmness made one feel doubly irritated. I knew that I had played badly, but I was not used to hearing myself blamed in any way ; and I had certainly never been reprovèd before in this fashion. I looked up at the stranger, with a proud, contemptuous glance, and a mocking smile, letting my eyes rest a moment on the many-coloured ribbons with which I perceived his plain overcoat was adorned.

"You appear to be a master," I said, with a covert sneer. "You seem to understand playing the tutor remarkably well !"

"Something of the sort, *Fraülein*," he answered, indifferently, without in the least losing his calm tranquillity of manner. "And my wish would be to have you as a pupil."

"It is a wish that I do not share in the least," I answered, coldly.

"So I should fancy. For I should be a hard master ; and would be no party to the sin of destroying your real talent for music by bestowing on you undeserved praise. I would lay all your faults before you, that you might correct them."

"You are a bear," I muttered in a half whisper. But the stranger heard me, and observed immediately :

"You have designated me very correctly, *Fraülein*. I am certainly a kind of bear."

"You have determined to prove yourself one by your behaviour to me," I cried, angrily.

"You played with such remarkable talent, *Fraülein*, that you awakened in me a desire to show you how to play still better," he said, in a tone which, for the first time, betrayed some little feeling of discomfort at my manner. "As for the rest, if you will now be so good as to play over that '*adagio*' passage again, I am sure you can manage to go through it properly."

"It is not my custom to perform before strangers," I said, majestically. "I will leave the instrument to you. As your criticisms on others are so severe, you can no doubt do far better than every one else on the piano." I stood up, and turned away, after making a scornful little bow.

"I am well used to being criticised myself, *Fraülein*," he answered sadly, sitting down before the piano, as I reached the room door. "But, I pray you, now listen to how I play the '*Huguenots*.' I hope you will not scruple to tell me of anything you think amiss, just as plainly as I told you of your faults."

My vanity and wounded pride made me linger when he said this; and on the instant I resolved to wait, and signify the disapproval I felt sure I should feel at his style of playing operatic music. For, as I said to myself, how could this presuming unknown music-master understand anything about the "*Huguenots*?"

When the stranger began to play, however, I started in amazement. Beautiful chords swelled under his fingers. Lovely tones came out of the wretched ill-tuned instrument. I felt instinctively that the hands which now touched the keys were those of a great master.

The lament of the betrayed *Huguenots* filled the little room with sobbing, wailing melody, and from that scene he went on through the beautiful music of the opera with such wonderful and varying expression that I felt as though the whole drama were enacted before me.

I crept back slowly, nearer and nearer to the player, and as he ended, I cried in a half whisper: "Oh, sir, who are you? I never heard anyone play like that before!"

"I am a poor travelling musician," he said, smiling. "I am about to try my fortune now in Venice."

"We are going to Venice too," I cried, joyfully. "You must not scruple to apply to us if we can be of use to you in any way. We have many influential friends and acquaintances there." I then told him my aunt's name, and he bowed gratefully.

"If I need your help, *Fraülein*, I shall not scruple to apply to you," he replied. "In the meantime, I trust you will try and forget your anger at my presumption in telling you of your faults."

He reached out his hand, and, without thinking of what I was about, I put mine for a moment within his grasp. Then throwing an expensive fur cloak over his shoulders, he left the room, and a few minutes later I heard the post-horn sounding. It was only then that I remembered I had never asked the stranger his name. I inquired about him from the landlord, but he could give me no information. He had never seen the gentleman before, he said, and had only supplied him with a little refreshment, which was all the traveller required of him.

When my aunt heard my story she was vexed with me for having assured an utter stranger he should have her patronage and interest; but I could think of nothing all the evening except the wonderful music I had heard.

Venice, the city of wonders, the home of romantic beauty and of dark mysteries, was reached by us at last. Venice, with its gloomy palaces, of which each stone has often been the witness of some great

deed, or of some terrible, all-important moment. Venice ; with its lofty buildings, its antique marble statues, and its great canals, its floor of green waves, and its manifold attractions of the past and present ; had opened its gates to us.

We had wondered over the masterpieces of Titian, Tintoretto, and Giorgione, had gazed in astonishment and delight at the paintings of Veronese and Bassano, in the gilded halls of the Doges' Palace. The famous men and women of old times had gazed down upon us from the walls, making us live and think in the past, and long to have been present at some of the great scenes we had read of. It was not until we had lived through our first enthusiasm for art that we took part in much of the social intercourse of the city. As time went on, however, we were overwhelmed with invitations.

We spent Christmas Eve at the house of some rich German friends, who kept the festival in a good old-fashioned way. There was a splendid Christmas tree, hung with beautiful things, and bright with many coloured lamps. The rooms were full of guests, and all seemed to enjoy the festivities.

Suddenly there was a flutter amongst those present. A name was mentioned, a great and famous name, when the master of the house, who had been absent for a moment, reappeared, in company with a new arrival. My heart beat fast when I heard this name, for I had many times longed to catch even a distant glimpse of its owner. Our host, I saw, was coming in our direction, and I watched the guests making way for the two gentlemen with ill-concealed eagerness.

"Herr Giacomo Meyerbeer wishes to be introduced to you two ladies," our entertainer said, laughingly, to my aunt. At that instant I got a good view of the great musician, and recognized in him the stranger whom I had so scorned at Palma Nuova, and whom I had then offered to patronize ! I trembled and blushed with shame, as he looked smilingly at me ; but he had pity on my confusion, and proved himself then and afterwards a most kind and trusty friend to me.

I need hardly say that I was present at the first appearance of the "Huguenots," in Venice, for which the great composer had come to the city.

On Christmas morning I received a lovely nosegay of flowers, accompanied by a copy of the "Huguenots," arranged for the piano-forte. In the book Meyerbeer had written :

"One may be half a bear, and yet rejoice in the talent of others."



## A DEAD LEAF.

A DEAD leaf drifted by the rain  
 Against the dripping window-pane,  
 Like faded hope that comes again  
     Athwart the breast,  
 When summer days have long passed by,  
 And all its fellows silent lie  
 Forgotten 'neath life's autumn sky  
     In peaceful rest.

Ah, little leaf ; you speak to me  
 Of what has been ; of what shall be :  
 I see a fair and spreading tree  
     In spring-time gay,  
 Its branches hid beneath a screen  
 Of feathery foliage fresh and green,  
 That glitters in noon's golden sheen,  
     Nor fears decay.

I see those branches gaunt and bare ;  
 I hear the wild winds moaning there ;  
 Damp vapours rising fill the air ;  
     Pale clouds flit low.  
 Sweet spring and summer, where are they ?  
 The gold and green are changed to grey ;  
 Grim winter holds his fallen prey  
     Beneath the snow.

I close my eyes : dark is the night ;  
 I wake : the world is clothed with light ;  
 I scarce can bear the dazzling sight  
     Which meets my view.  
 Winter and winter's night are past,  
 A wondrous day has dawned at last,  
 A spring of springs o'er earth has cast  
     A glory new.  
 Wise little leaf ! my heart beats fast ;  
     Your tale is true.

EMMA RHODES.





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